DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 085 708 CS 200 826

AUTHOR	Berger, Allen, Ed.; Smith, Blanche Hope, Ed.
TITLE	Language Activities: Classroom Practices in Teaching English 1973-1974; Eleventh Report of the Committee on Classroom Practices.
INSTITUTION	National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, Ill.
PUB DATE	73
NOTE	102p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Ill. 61801 (Stock No. 00885, $1.95 non-member, $1.75 member)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$6.58
DESCRIPTORS	Choral Speaking; Creative Writing; Critical Reading; *English Instruction; Films; Folk Culture; Integrated Curriculum; Interviews; *Language Arts; *Language Development; *Language Enrichment; Listening; Literature; Oral Communication; Poetry; Reading Instruction; Reading Skills; *Teaching Techniques; Vocabulary Development; Writing

ABSTRACT

This book contains over fifty ideas and activities related to language development at all educational levels. Suggestions are provided for teaching composition, critical reading of newspapers and magazines, folklore, creative writing, vocabulary development, poetry, epics and films, interviewing techniques, metaphors, choral speaking, silent films, English in a multi-racial context, and other language arts. (WR)

Classroom Practices
in Teaching English
1973-1974

Eleventh Report
of the Committee
on Classroom Practices

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED 085708

Language Activities

Allen Berger and
Blanche Hope Smith,
Cochairmen

OS 200 826

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
1111 KENYON ROAD
URBANA, ILLINOIS 61801

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

NCTE COMMITTEE ON CLASSROOM PRACTICES IN TEACHING ENGLISH: Allen Berger, University of Alberta, and Blanche Hope Smith, University of Virginia, Cochairmen; Ouida H. Clapp, Buffalo Public Schools, New York; Norman Nathan, Florida Atlantic University; Virginia M. Obrig, Greenwich High School, Connecticut; Clara A. Pederson, University of North Dakota; Samira Rafla Tallboy, Cedar Park School, Point Claire, Quebec; Evelyn Gott Burack, Long Lots Junior High School, Westport, Connecticut, *ex officio*.

NCTE EDITORIAL BOARD: Richard Lloyd-Jones, Charlotte S. Huck, Owen Thomas, Richard Corbin, Roy C. O'Donnell, Robert F. Hogan, *ex officio*, Paul O'Dea *ex officio*. COVER DESIGN: Kirk George Panikis. STAFF EDITOR: Duncan Streeter.

Copyright © 1973 by the National Council of Teachers of English.
All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America.
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 65-957.
ISBN 0-8141-0088-5. NCTE Stock Number 00885.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

National Council of Teachers of English

TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	vii	
Language Activities That Uplift and Downdrop	viii	Allen Berger

LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES AND PERSONAL GROWTH

Insight through Interviews	1	Marcia B. Conner
Communication	3	Mary Richardson
Interviewing and Writing	4	M. Jean McAndrews
Conversation Groups	5	R. Baird Shuman
The Writing on the Wall	6	Sylvia Spann
Reading Enjoyment	9	Don Meyer
Like a Miracle	10	Nell A. Rogers
Participatory Approach to Criticism	13	David A. Lane
Teaching Folklore	14	Charles R. Duke
Folk Tales	16	G. Howard Poteet
Schemes for Discussion Groups	17	Sandra Fischer
Give and Take	21	Judy Mitchell

COMPOSITION SITUATIONS

The Writing Process	23	Donald M. Murray
Peer Tutors	25	Steve Arnold
Developing the Personal Voice	26	Phyllis Martin Lang
Writing Improvement	27	James E. Davis and Glenn Jambor
A Climate for Creativity	28	Marlam Karnish
Show and Tell in High School and College	32	Barbara Kirkpatrick
A Visual Aid to Writing Improvement	34	Ruth L. Optner
Photographs	36	Leonard Williams
Taking Fantasy Trips	37	Judith H. Deemer

Map Writing	39	Gilbert Prince
Writing Metaphorically	40	Ronald Raybin
Puns	43	Adelio F. Maccentelli
Computer-Assisted Instruction in Advanced Composition	44	Roberta M. Palumbo

LITERATURE

Teaching a Graves Truth	49	Martin Tucker
Poetry as Kaleidoscope	52	Betty Barbara Sipe
Schazaam!	55	George D. Masters
Teaching the Elegy: A Creative Response	56	David J. Burt
Kowalski and Odysseus: Relevance of the Epic	58	Steven Hind
Reporting Myths	61	Carmela R. Visco
Language and the Logic of Dilemma: Fostering Some Understandings	62	Leigh H. Holmes
Unsmiling Aspects of Literature and Life	65	Joan Griffin
Reading Newspapers and Magazines Critically	68	Jack R. Cameron

FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

The Language of Labels	71	Norine Odland
Poetic Talk	72	Avis C. Swart
Planning an Integrated Language Arts Unit	73	Patricia A. Payne and Rebecca Shandling
The Descriptive Power of Children's Oral Language	75	Robert Jackson
Finger Plays	81	Margaret Breitenbach
Language Activities in the One-Room School	82	Stella E. Happel
Silent Films	83	Ellen Attias
Magic of Drama	84	Prentiss M. Hosford
Reading Comprehension	87	John M. Hughes
Writing Early	88	E. M. Martin

PREFACE

Growth through language development—the theme of this issue—grew out of concerns and interests expressed by teachers attending the open meeting of the Committee on Classroom Practices in Teaching English held during the sixty-second annual convention of the National Council of Teachers of English in Minneapolis, November 1972.

Invitations for manuscripts appeared in the February 1973 issues of *Elementary English*, *English Journal*, and *College English* and also in the journals of many Council-affiliated organizations. Many journals tangential to the field of English also included the invitation for manuscripts.

By mid-April, exactly 117 manuscripts arrived from teachers in thirty-four states, two provinces, and three countries beyond Canada and the United States. These manuscripts were evaluated by Committee members Ouida Clapp, Norman Nathan, Virginia Obrig, Clara Pederson, Samira Rafla Tallboy, and the cochairmen. In addition to those manuscripts chosen for publication, the Committee also selected brief statements culled from 16 others. The writers of these articles and statements teach in elementary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities in twenty-three states, one province, England, and Wales.

We hope that you enjoy reading the following pages of LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES, the eleventh issue of *Classroom Practices in Teaching English*.

A.B. and B.H.S.

ALLEN BERGER

LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES THAT UPLIFT AND DOWNDROP

Last spring I was involved in three educational language activities just about the same time that we were putting finishing touches on this issue of *Classroom Practices.* One activity involved the examination of a doctoral candidate in educational psychology; a second involved the supervision of student teachers; and the third involved interviews with Indian children.

I would like to share some of my reflections with you about these three language activities in education.

The doctoral student did a dissertation titled *Socioeconomic Status Differences in Mother-Child Verbal Interaction Practices as Related to the Symbolic Mediatory Processes of the Child.* Since he was a student in educational psychology and not "pure" psychology, and since it was not clear to me how his research would be of value to teachers or others involved with students, I asked what his paper had to do with education. "Very little," was the initial reply. Since his study involved poor people, I asked him if he knew any poor people personally, and when he said no, I asked how he would feel if he were a poor person reading his dissertation. One of the elements in his dissertation that prompted my question was his consistent use of labels to describe—presumably scientifically—the socioeconomic status of the people discussed in his dissertation. After a few pages, labels obscured humans.

If language has the power to uplift, then it certainly must have the power to downdrop.* I see no justifiable excuse to use labels like "back-

*I'm not certain if the converse of uplift is downput, downdrop, downfall, or something else.

ward child" and "lower class" under the claim of being scientific and objective when we all know full well the connotative damnation contained in such labels. Indeed, such deceptive language is a triple-barreled threat; it harms the user, slanders the used, and clouds important human variables which influence the outcome of educational research. Even Basil Bernstein, whose research is so often quoted by those looking at language and sociology, avoids using the phrase "lower class" in his recent works.

Social commentators like Jules Feiffer and his thousands of readers must wonder about intellectuals—or, more accurately, emotionals—who use euphemistic terms like *needy*, or *deprived*, or *underprivileged*, or *disadvantaged* to describe poor people. Concern about using similarly euphemistic terms to "cover up" slums was expressed more than a decade ago by former Harvard President James B. Conant.

In a similar way, "objectivity" seems to require that doctoral students all over the continent must write their research reports in the third person. (Subjectivity, which has so many charms, must wonder why so many researchers—except Piaget and a few other giants—adore Objectivity.) I have never heard a satisfactory explanation of how phrases like "It was found that" and "The investigator administered the tests" instead of "I found" and "I tested" make for greater objectivity—though it is easy to see how such phrases give the impression of greater objectivity. Giants like Sir Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein described their experiments and observations in simple, uplifting language. From Newton:

> I took a black oblong stiff Paper terminated by Parallel Sides, and with a Perpendicular right Line drawn cross from one Side to the other, distinguished it into two equal Parts. One of these parts I painted with a red colour and the other with a blue. The Paper was very black. . . .
>
> —(from the first book of *Opticks*)

From Einstein:

> I am standing in front of a gas range. Standing alongside of each other on the range are two pans so much alike that one may be mistaken for the other. Both are half full of water. I notice that steam is being emitted continuously from the one pan, but not from the other. I am surprised at this, even if I have never seen either a gas range or a pan before. . . . [and] I shall remain astonished and dissatisfied until I have discovered some circumstance to which I can attribute the different behaviour of the two pans.
>
> Analogously, I seek in vain for a real something in classical mechanics (or in the special theory of relativity) to which I can attribute the different behaviour of bodies considered with respect to the reference-

> systems K and K'. Newton saw this objection and attempted to invalidate it. . . .
>
> —(from *Relativity: The Special and General Theory*)

If Einstein and Newton wrote in straightforward language, I wonder why so many doctoral investigators now feel they must combine the third person with the passive voice and come up with convoluted prose. It strikes me as very unlikely that Newton would describe his experiences by saying, "The investigator was sitting under an apple tree when it appeared that an object that looked like an apple either fell or was dropped upon the investigator's head."

It was my privilege and good fortune to work with nine student teachers in one of the livelier center city schools during May. My first meeting with the nine third-year university students was the first in a series held every late afternoon in the staff room of the school. There student teachers shared practices that worked well or otherwise, and through such sharing they enlarged their own repertoire of skills. The language activity that the student teachers engaged in each afternoon had much in common with the uplifting and supportive meetings of people in Weight Watchers or Alcoholics Anonymous. Teachers shared with each other their anxieties and needs, sorting out their own feelings from those of their students when these seemed to run at cross purposes. Resolving difficulties resulting from such frustrating situations as when teachers' needs to be liked conflicted with students' needs for firmness and structure enabled them to handle what few control problems arose and to provide an atmosphere for many exciting learning experiences for the children.

Toward the end of the school year I talked with twenty Indian children between the ages of seven and seventeen to learn their views and feelings about education. My research assistant and I had conducted similar conversations with their parents in their homes during the preceding year. Involved in these conversations were nine families, five living in Edmonton, one living about five miles west on the Winterburn Reserve, and three living about fifty miles south on the Hobbema Reserve. During the preceding year each family had been visited on four separate occasions, with one exception, and the conversations, which ranged up to seven hours for each visit, were conducted in Cree and English. The research had incorporated a number of relatively unique features, which included interviewing without using tape recorders, analyzing the data through content analysis, involving the families in organizing the data, and writing a significant portion of the final report in the first person.

The parents had expressed the opinion that teachers seem to know little about Indian children or culture and suggested the value of home visitations:*

> . . . teachers would be welcomed in many homes, but the Indian people are shy, and so the teachers must make the first move. The teachers should take the initiative in expressing interest in visiting homes. She mentioned one teacher who sent notes home expressing his interest. The children gave the notes to the parents and some of the parents invited him to come and visit with them.
>
> —Family H (Hobbema Reserve)

To my surprise most of the children also said they would like to have their teachers come to visit them. Only a few children expressed negative feelings: one said that her parents would not be able to see how clean she keeps her desk in school; some said that they did not trust their teachers completely.

The need to perceive teachers as being trustworthy and approachable came from all the children. One teenager said that she had lost interest in everything for about a month—her studies, everything, she said, had come to a stop—until she approached one of her teachers and spoke to him for a few minutes each day after school for about a week. And then one day he gave her a book to read and things were back to normal again.

The power that teachers, as listeners, wield during language activities must not be dismissed lightly. In the words of Dwayne Huebner:

> Speaking and listening lead to conversation only when the listening influences the speaking, and leads to new speaking, and perhaps to a new speaker and listener. (p. 151)

Drawing upon the thoughts of Schweitzer, Fromm, Allport, Steere, Tillich, May, and others, Huebner notes:

> The listener, perhaps, establishes the climate for conversation, for it is he who determines whether the words addressed to him are simply to be acknowledged as words, or as signs indicating the willingness of the speaker to bridge the gap separating them. (p. 149)

*Teachers visiting homes–and administrators giving them time to do so–is a controversial idea (as was made clear to me two summers ago by a woman who had completed an orientation course for teachers of Indian children: she claimed that students were told *not* to visit the homes of Indians because of the possibility of talking about "politics"). But the fact remains that those parents who do not go to parent-teacher meetings may be the very ones who, for their children's sakes, need to be reached most urgently; and, in trying to reach them, it is helpful to remember that many people feel more comfortable in the familiar surroundings of their own homes than within the confines of an imposing school building where, God forbid, they may all be seated facing the teacher in the same way as they did when they were children.

Other interesting thoughts on listening are expressed by Edward T. Hall:

> Western culture has a habit of artificially separating events that really belong together. Talking and listening is just one example, for the two processes are intricately intertwined. One cannot do one without the other. Even when alone and "talking to one's self" there is a part of the mind that speaks while another part listens and monitors. What is important is that the listener has a profound effect on the speaker. That is, in Skinnerian terms, the listener is either positively or negatively reinforcing the speaker at all times. He may even guide the conversation without knowing it, by a process of positive and negative cues showing interest in some things or frowning or being noncommittal about others. Furthermore, status, relationship, feelings, attitude towards the topic being discussed, the speaker or the activity engaged in, as well as an image of the self are all communicated. . . .
>
> —(from *Listening Behavior: Some Cultural Differences*)

Both Hall and Huebner give specific examples of verbal and nonverbal, speaker-listener interaction in the schools.

These, then, are glimpses of the power of language and language activities in our lives: often moving, like inspiring music or the resurgence of feeling experienced by the lonely in every city who talk to telephone operators daily; uplifting, like the practices and activities that the reader will find described on the following pages.

References

Bellack, Arno A., et al. *The Language of the Classroom.* New York: Teachers College Press, 1966.

Berger, Allen, and Das, J. P. *A Report on Indian Education:* (A) *In-Depth Study of Nine Indian Families;* (B) *Memory and Reasoning in Native Children: An Effort at Improvement through the Teaching of Cognitive Strategies.* Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1972. ED 071 812.

Bernstein, Basil. *Class, Codes, and Control: Theoretical Studies towards a Sociology of Language.* Vol. 1. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971.

_____. *Class, Codes, and Control: Applied Studies towards a Sociology of Language.* Vol. 2. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973.

Brock, G. L. *Varieties of English.* London: Macmillan, 1973.

Buber, Martin. *I and Thou.* 2d. ed. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958.

Frye, Northrop. *The Educated Imagination.* Toronto: Hunter Rose Company, 1963.

Hall, Edward T. *The Silent Language.* New York: Doubleday and Company, 1959.

_____. *Listening Behavior: Some Cultural Differences.* Occasional Paper no. 2. Chicago: Center for the Advancement of Intercultural Studies. Based in part on an article in *Phi Delta Kappan* 50 (1969): 379-80.

Huebner, Dwayne. "New Modes of Man's Relationship to Man." In *New In-*

sights and the Curriculum, edited by Alexander Frazier. Yearbook of the Association for the Study of Curriculum and Development, 1963.

Jackson, Philip W. *Life in Classrooms*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.

Kavanagh, James F., and Mattingly, Ignatius G., eds. *Language by Ear and by Eye: The Relationships between Speech and Reading*. Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1972.

Mead, George Herbert. *Mind, Self, and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934.

Opie, Iona, and Opie, Peter. *Children's Games in Street and Playground*. London: Oxford University Press, 1969.

LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES AND PERSONAL GROWTH

An assignment to write persuasively through a report of interviews became much more than that for many students. Marcia B. Conner teaches at Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

MARCIA B. CONNER

INSIGHT THROUGH INTERVIEWS

"I really liked this assignment. In fact, I spent more time on it than anything I've done since I came to college." Jackie handed me her paper as if she were giving me a prize. When this little scene had been repeated several times, I began to look more closely at the assignment to see why it evoked such enthusiasm.

Basically, the assignment was to be persuasive by conducting and writing a report of interviews. Because so many pre-law students were electing my freshman composition course, I had been looking for different ways for them to be persuasive. They had all written the standard theme of argumentation, and a few students had even successfully experimented with persuasion through satire, à la Art Buchwald, although this was an extremely difficult method for most to manage. The pre-law students had also written persuasive papers based on new reports, in the manner of a lawyer arguing a case before a jury; the introduction and conclusion were written as a speech to the jury, while the body of evidence was developed in question and answer sequences with various witnesses. However, this technique was really useful only to the pre-law students. Persuasion through interviews, on the other hand, offered a different approach to all the students.

The idea for the assignment came from an article by Everett Groseclose in the *Wall Street Journal*. Groseclose had traveled across the country, stopping at both small towns and large metropolitan areas, and had interviewed a cross section of people to touch the pulse of America. From these interviews he came to the conclusion that people in America are turning inward, that they are becoming more introspective and moody, less protest oriented than they were in the 60s. The article was simply

a vivid account of a series of interviews, with the author's conclusions about the interviews appearing near the beginning of the article. No further generalizations were made, and none were needed as the interviews were eloquent enough.

Using the campus as a microcosm, the students are assigned to seek the opinions of colleagues, trying to see if there is a common thread of ideas or impressions about the college. If they wish, they may narrow the focus to a consideration of grades or tenure or sexual attitudes. The main thing they must accomplish through the assignment is to write persuasively. (On occasion, I have permitted students who were unusually busy and who might not have time for the interviews to make the whole thing up, but the results are always disappointing: the "people" they interview are stereotypes, and the persuasive element is lost.)

What are the possibilities in this assignment? First of all, the student's creative powers come into play through the selection of people he chooses to interview. Does he want a cross section of all students, a cross section of freshmen, a cross section of the entire college?

His next decision is equally crucial: What questions should be asked? He can begin tentatively by interviewing two or three friends to see what happens. Or he may decide in advance what questions will evoke the response he seeks. In preparation, we discuss the different responses one can expect to a question worded like "What's wrong with Dickinson College?" in contrast to "How do you feel about Dickinson College?"

The generalizations that emerge as a result of the interviews must appear in a separate paragraph near the beginning of the paper. The student learns that he needs to report quite a number of interviews; two or three are not enough to produce a convincing generalization about campus attitudes. In this kind of assignment, it's the total effect, the accumulation of images, that enables the writer to be persuasive.

Two important writing skills are developed through the assignment: the student must learn to observe and report "telling" details of the situation or setting for each interview and about the person being interviewed. In addition, the student must stress the distinction between the general and the specific (and here I frequently suggest as supplementary reading Hayakawa's chapter "Bessie the Cow" from *Language in Thought and Action*).

The assignment has other benefits to students. We tend to forget, I think, that college can be a very lonely place. This assignment gives each student an opportunity to approach other students about a common concern. One girl mentioned that she had met some interesting new people and had engaged in innumerable discussions while working on this

assignment. Another student confided that he felt he had actually changed his ideas about college: "It's a good thing to stop and take stock of yourself once in a while," he observed. This reaction puzzled me because I did not think of the assignment as a "taking stock of yourself" kind of thing. Perhaps what happened was that the student gained insights through listening and relating his ideas to those of others. Some kind of self-evaluation was bound to occur. In any event, what began as an experimental assignment to develop persuasive writing powers became an interesting and insightful experience for both me and my students.

COMMUNICATION

Children learn through communication with themselves and through contacts with other children and adults. So activities should allow children to work alone at times and at other times in groups. This way they will collect subjects rather than subjects being thrust upon them.

Mary Richardson
Residential Centre for Spastics
Davesbury Near Warrington
Lancashire, England

Having students interview one another during the first weeks of school can be a way to build a friendly, relaxed classroom atmosphere. M. Jean McAndrews teaches at Central High School, Scranton, Pennsylvania.

M. JEAN MCANDREWS

INTERVIEWING AND WRITING

Over half of the students in my junior English classes are new in the school, having come from two different junior high schools. So I planned an interviewing-writing unit early in the school year to help them become better acquainted, to build a friendlier, more relaxed atmosphere, and to provide practice in listening to each other with the end purpose of writing an interesting character sketch for all to read.

My plan was that each student would interview another and write up the interview as a composition assignment. Then each student would in turn be interviewed by still another student, making two such contacts with others in the room. I numbered slips of paper and each student pulled a numbered slip. Odd numbers interviewed the next highest even numbers for fifteen minutes, and then even numbers interviewed the next higher odd numbers for fifteen minutes. Students took notes to be used in writing their articles.

In preparation for the interviewing period, I asked the students to read an interview in a sports magazine, movie magazine, or newspaper, jotting down some questions which would bring out the personality of the subject or provide insight into his character. These we listed on the board as a guide for the student interviews. Then I read aloud to the class the beginning paragraphs of some interviews I had gathered from different magazines, and the class discussed what the writer had accomplished in his introduction—aroused interest, given background information, etc. Next we looked at endings and analyzed what made an effective ending. The body of the composition I left to their own creativity.

After the interviews were written, each "subject" proofread what was written about himself to catch any erroneous statements. Then I read and

made comments on the papers and returned them for final revisions; these were displayed in the back of the room. For some time this board was a center of attraction, and one interview of a foreign exchange student found its way into the school newspaper.

Hopefully I accomplished my objective of pulling the class together into a tighter, more closely knit, harmonious group and to encourage awareness of each other through the language arts.

CONVERSATION GROUPS

One way to encourage conversation is to establish rotating conversation groups and to begin the English class by reading or having a student read from the newspaper some brief story on a social issue. Then let each conversation group of four or five students discuss among themselves the news story. Such activity will yield good results—particularly if done two or three times a week with different people forming the various groups.

R. Baird Shuman
Duke University
Durham, North Carolina

Student teachers often bring new ideas and practices into English classrooms. One such practice, utilizing students' predilections to write graffiti, is described by Sylvia Spann, a teacher at Baker High School, Mobile, Alabama.

SYLVIA SPANN

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

While planning a unit on poetry for our eleventh grade classes, student teacher Maxine Crawford began casting about for activities to get students actively involved in looking for poems that appealed to them individually, in sharing these poems with their peers, and in writing original verse. She remembered some research she had done on graffiti: "communication with others," "a reaching out," "an outlet for self-expression." If graffiti serve these functions, why not *encourage* writing on the walls?

Maxine began the unit in a traditional manner by discussing techniques, forms, and types of poetry, reading examples, giving handouts of some personal favorites, and playing recordings. Each day for five consecutive days (while discussing poetry in general) she posted a colorful sign with bold letters on the molding of a corner wall, a space about eight feet by ten feet. The first sign said "Coming Soon"; the second, "Watch This Space." The students paid little attention to the first sign but became curious at the appearance of the second. Maxine equivocated when questioned about the significance of the signs; I pretended ignorance. By the third day, when "Macavity Is Coming" appeared, the students went directly to the wall upon entering the classroom and conversations began to center on the signs and their possible meanings. The fourth day Maxine posted "Have You Been Vaccinated against Onomatopoeia?" And finally, "O Frabjous Day! Callooh! Callay!"

The following weekend Maxine covered the entire corner wall area with heavy brown wrapping paper ("Brown," she said, "because white is too forbidding"). She pasted magazine illustrations randomly on the paper, choosing pictures that evoked images or experiences within the realm of teenagers—a football player in motion, a young boy and girl on

a picnic, a girl sitting quietly alone, an isolated shack, food. She printed several of her favorite poems on the paper and tacked a package of marking pens in assorted colors midpoint on the wall. Large colorful letters across the top of the paper proclaimed "The Poetry Wall."

The students were told that the wall was for them to write on, anything they chose—a favorite poem or an original one, a jingle, a quotation—anything that appealed to them. For several days nothing happened. No one wanted to be the first to write. The classes feigned disinterest. Maxine lamented that some of the magic must be lost when one is given license to write on walls. I chose a unique poem of e. e. cummings, one of his "shape" verses, to write on the wall, and that drew some comment. Then one of our girls came in during lunch while no one was in the room and wrote an original poem on the paper; another copied one familiar to her, and the ice broke.

"The Wall" became the focal point of interest. Students came to class early to begin writing, stayed late, came in at breaks, and spent their lunch hours there. Those who weren't writing were reading, and the room became a gathering place for the school. Everyone wanted to write on the wall, and students who weren't in our classes asked to add to the rapidly growing load.

The quiet boy in the corner who seldom spoke wrote his favorite poem, "Romeo and Juliet," by Richard Brautigan[1]:

> If you will, die for me
>
> material deleted due to copyright restrictions
>
> I will bring the bleach.

A sensitive girl in fourth period wrote Eve Merriam's "Cheers"[2]:

> The frogs and the serpents each had a football team,
>
> material deleted due to copyright restrictions

1. "Romeo and Juliet" is from the book, *Rommel Drives on Deep into Egypt*, by Richard Brautigan. Copyright © 1970 by Richard Brautigan. Reprinted by permission of Seymour Lawrence/Delacorte Press.

2. Copyright © 1964 by Eve Merriam. From *It Doesn't Always Have to Rhyme*. Used by permission of Atheneum Publishers.

material deleted
due to copyright
restrictions

With an S-S-S!"

The bubbly, bouncy, seldom serious cheerleader added her original lines:

Whirling, swirling winds of gold
Inside a crumbline mind,
Are keeping secrets never told
In front of things behind.
Two stepping stones splash silently
In pools of colored glass,
Reflections running through my mind,
The days I know are past.
The times when day went hastily
Through bits of ash and haze,
Now are gone along their way
To better times and days.

The old "Roses are red" jingles appeared alongside verses currently printed on popular posters ("Today is the first day of the rest of your life." "Life without love is like a tree without blossoms or fruit"). Contemporary slogans like "Save water, take a shower with a friend" and exchanges among several people typical of some of the best graffiti dialogues were also prominent. Much of each was trite and even more was corny. But they were looking for poems and expressing themselves and receiving extrinsic and intrinsic rewards and communicating on several levels. Students who had never found a common ground for conversation engaged in discussions, even arguments, at "the wall."

Within a week the wall was filled, and Maxine covered another area with brown paper. This time students illustrated the paper with original designs, drawings, and cartoons, and competition became more intense.

The second wall is covered now and Maxine is leaving. She's taking her "walls" with her, and since I can't bear the thought of being left with dull, commonplace paneling, I plan to erect another. I like the activity in my room. I like having a classroom situation that provides so much

entertainment that there is never any idle time. Five extra minutes at the end of a period is "wall writing" time. And I, for one, like reading the writing on the wall.

READING ENJOYMENT

Students should be given time and help in selecting and beginning their own reading. By that I mean they should read a novel that is not too long or too difficult, one that "grabs" them. They should be encouraged to read as rapidly as possible, not to look up vocabulary words, not to be concerned with extracting every ounce of possible meaning out of every passage. They can be reminded of the observation of John Barrymore that looking up words while reading is like answering the doorbell on one's honeymoon. Let the students enjoy: a short novel, time and encouragement to read it in, and a sympathetic sounding board in the teacher—these are the best aids in achieving this goal.

Don Meyer
Ventura College
Ventura, California

Language and cultural heritage are vital components in the education of all students. Nell Rogers, a teacher in Philadelphia, Mississippi, describes how discussing and writing about local ethnic groups helped students to know and appreciate one another.

NELL A. ROGERS

LIKE A MIRACLE

My first years as a high school English teacher coincided with the desegregation of the public schools in Mississippi, and one day I found myself teaching blacks, whites, and Choctaw Indians. On the surface the students were remarkably polite, but their contact with each other ended at the point of classroom civility. Following a number of futile attempts planned to encourage these young people to communicate with each other, to learn about each other, I was discouraged and began to wonder whether all my efforts to increase rapport among these students of different races and upbringings would fail. It was about this time that I decided to embark with students on an exploration of ethnic groups and cultures in Neshoba County.

My first step was to "label" the whites "hill people"—an insulting term to those students who were college bound. But I described the hill man or woman as a proud person, a descendant of a rugged, courageous people who had tenaciously clung to the red clay hills, barely eking out an existence for many years before a few factories and lumber mills came to bolster the economy. Students gave examples of courage and strength they had seen or heard of. We talked about the language of the area and found that people here practiced the subtle art of phatic language.* We spent time describing the wonderful political contests and the oratory often heard from the steps of the county's red brick courthouse in its

*A native of Neshoba County, on visiting an acquaintance in order to ask a favor, will rarely state the purpose of his visit until he has established an air of sociability by inquiring about his host's family, his health and business. He is also expected to make mention of any current community happening before coming to the purpose of his visit.

magnolia-shaded town square. The students became sensitively aware of the "hill folk" as they thought of the old men who gathered regularly in the courthouse halls and on its broad porch to whittle, spit tobacco and snuff at stained cuspidors, and talk of the hard times of the past and the changes facing them. Soon the white students came to see themselves as belonging to a lineage of patient, basically good men with a vast array of unique cultural characteristics; but they also came to realize that the hill people were not always good men: at times they were stubborn, resisting change, responding with violence to those bringing it. During these discussions, the black and Indian students realized that their white counterparts were not completely oblivious to the fact that their forebears had not always acted with kindness and justice.

When one of the black students began to reveal a favorite gathering place called "the hill," a fifty-year-old baseball rivalry between two black communities, and the religious practices of a small church, student interest in black culture was aroused, and they began borrowing books by black authors. Hearing about the problems of the eldest of eleven children who had to work in a hotel where men attempted to abuse her was worth more to the Neshoba County white students in terms of human understanding than all the civil rights rhetoric in the world. Knowing that a classmate had attended a tin-walled school heated with a wood-burning stove and had used the same reader for three years said more about unequal education to these students than the words of hundreds of court decisions.

Although only a few Choctaws attend the public schools (most going to the Bureau of Indian Affairs school on the nearby reservation), some students had visited the reservation for arts and crafts festivals, while others had observed them shopping in town. Apart from this casual familiarity, though, most students knew nothing about the culture or tragic history of the first inhabitants of Neshoba County. Through research and class discussion the students learned of the attempted removal of the Choctaws from Mississippi in the 1830s, the lack of concern on the part of the federal government for the health, housing, and educational needs of the people in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and the near extinction of the tribal population by an influenza epidemic in 1917. The white and black students became aware of the Choctaw's efforts to become self-governing and to preserve tribal customs and crafts. Gradually they realized the delicate position of the Choctaw students enrolled in a public school, confronted with possible rejection by friends on the reservation and faced with the prejudice of students in the public schools.

No published fictional works by Choctaws could be found, so students

read the annual literary publication of the Institute of American Indian Arts, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

To complete the unit, each student wrote a sketch about an individual, a situation, or both which he felt exemplified an ethnic group. When the papers were completed, they were typed, duplicated, and gathered into booklets. Each student received his own copy of the student writing and saw for the first time his own words and name in print. (Some students used pseudonyms, enjoying the process of choosing an appropriate one.) The librarian asked for copies and kept them in the library for the student body to read.

The following are two examples from the students' writings which indicate a growing awareness of their world.

> On any day of the week, but mainly on Saturdays, old men go to the county courthouse to sit or stand around and talk about the crops and weather.
>
> The one who seems most interesting to me is standing by himself, as if waiting for someone. He talks to the floor about his problems and then nods his head. If he didn't have his cane to support himself, he would surely fall. From under his Sunday hat peers hair the color of cotton. His eyes are full of worry. There just seems to be no answer to his problems. The dirt under the fingernails of his wrinkled hands shows that he works hard from early in the day until late at night.
>
> He is dressed shabbily. His faded, checked shirt and his overalls show the sign of many days of wear. The dried mud on his shoes tells that his crops got a good rain yesterday. There are dark spots where his snuff has dribbled down his chin and rested on the front of his overalls.
>
> After the old man has thought over his problems, and his wife has gathered up food and other necessities for another week, the old man leaves the courthouse, leaving his spot quiet until another Saturday.

> I know a lady preacher. On every Sunday morning she will go in her yard and preach. She wears a long dress with a cross around her neck. On Sunday morning when she preaches, anyone from ten blocks can hear her and understand her when she preaches.
>
> She is a real nice lady when a person is very ill or just ill. She will go to a house and pray for the sick person and in a few days, he will be doing better. She gets small children and go in someone's yard and they will sing and she will pray for the children. She said that one day they will go to live in heaven and be angels.
>
> She have a prayer meeting every Wednesday night and a lot of people come and they will be singing and praying and someone will get up and testify and she will pray. If a person has sinned and is feel-

ing bad about it, they will take they problems to her. She will pray for them and in a few days they problems are over.
She work like a miracle.

Hopefully all of us will "work like a miracle" to bring greater understanding to others.

PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO CRITICISM

A central issue in English teaching should be the concept of culture, for English is a cultural achievement. Yet it has been clearly shown that our society contains a variety of cultural patterns, each with its own set of values. Why then impose one tradition of criticism on all literature? Consideration of this cultural complexity is important, since alienation is caused by attempts to impose one pattern on another. If an attempt is made to peddle an alien culture, alienation will take place unless an attitude of participatory criticism has been first established. . . .

We think in culturally derived, personally developed linguistic symbols. To deny the validity of one group of symbols in preference to another is to deny the worth of the individual and his culture. But if we participate in the cultural identity of our pupils, we can then create an awareness of and respect for other cultures and literary forms. This is only possible among equals who share the same basic assumptions. To start by creating cultural inferiority is not to start at all. The individual must feel involved and must feel that his contribution is valid.

From the basis of this positive approach we will foster the development of a relative critical awareness. Teachers will always transmit their own values to their pupils, but this transmission must be based on integrity and equality so that the pupil can be sure of the validity of his own views and his own ability to assess the various experiences which he encounters.

David A. Lane
Chislehurst, Kent
England

The study of folklore, both of a given locale and of students' own subculture, can enhance language growth and self-understanding. Charles Duke, assistant professor of English at Plymouth State College, New Hampshire, shares specific suggestions.

CHARLES R. DUKE

TEACHING FOLKLORE

Folklore can be found everywhere, and no one is untouched by it. It can be urban, suburban, or rural. No unusual expertise is needed to begin a study of one's neighborhood or to collect samples of various customs and traditions peculiar to an area, whether that area is in the heart of Harlem, the middle of Scarsdale, New York, or the mountain country of Rabun Gap, Georgia.

Young people take to folklore naturally. Adolescents tend to operate as subculture groups complete with customs and codes. Just look at the many games young people invent and the metaphors they use. Each group has its code of communication, sometimes verbal, sometimes nonverbal. Sometimes these group codes are reflected in tangible signs—clothes, possessions, symbols. Students who examine the traditional communication codes of their school and neighborhood become more aware of how these operate and contribute to the behavior of people.

Many stories told by children grow out of their experiences and cultural backgrounds. Such tales frequently carry unwritten social history which, when examined, can help in developing respect for cultural differences. These tales also invite explorations of customs, and almost every family has certain customs that it takes for granted. By talking about these items, explaining and recording them, students become involved in exploring the influences which shape a person and his beliefs.

Areas for investigation abound. Here are some possibilities relating to what the individual believes and what contributes to his beliefs:

SUPERSTITIONS: Many superstitions have been collected, but new ones keep appearing and the variations on old ones are interesting. Subgroupings of superstitions can be developed, e.g., sports, job, school, home.

JOKES: It is often difficult to determine the origin of a joke, but jokes frequently reveal aspects of local culture. Occasionally a series of jokes will appear that use one folk motif.

CURES: Most people carry with them certain folk notions about medical treatment. A collection of these can reveal some interesting cultural attitudes.

FOODS: Family recipes, certain foods for special events, and variations of traditional recipes are abundant.

COSTUME: One does not have to go far to discover examples of articles of clothing that are important to a family or social group. Even the current fads among teenagers should suggest some ideas, e.g., emphasis upon blue jeans, work shirts, mountaineer boots, etc.

LANGUAGE: The gamut of possibilities here is so large that no one should have difficulty beginning; his problem will be where to stop: e.g., argot of different groups, family language versus public language, riddles, proverbs, rhymes, graffiti.

NAMES AND NICKNAMES: Who names the child in the family? How did various nicknames originate? What's the importance of a name?

Beyond the individual and his immediate family or gang lies a larger environment that offers rich resources for folklore study. Consider the following:

PLACES AND PLACE NAMES: People who live in one area for some time develop names and explanations for places. These names and explanations are seldom written down, and the difference between the historical explanation and the folkloristic one can be startling.

LAND DIVISIONS AND BOUNDARIES: Invisible and visible boundaries exist which natives accept and newcomers often violate. How did the boundaries originate? What do they suggest about people?

BUILDINGS AND DWELLINGS: Different sections of the country use different building materials and designs. An examination of apartment houses in a city, for example, can offer important information about living patterns, social distinctions, and architectural traditions.

The following hints, adapted from the Nebraska Curriculum Series, should help both teacher and students during the collection process.

1. Look for clues that suggest folklore roots and follow up every clue—newspapers, magazines, radio, television, as well as chance conversations.
2. Record as much information about the background of the lore as possible. For instance, when a game such as "kickers" is recorded, the time, place, and occasion calling it forth should be noted in the entry; information about the informant also should be included.
3. Record the seemingly commonplace as well as quaint, unique customs, sayings, and beliefs. What is well known in Darien, Connecticut, may not be commonplace in Durham, North Carolina.
4. Always ask the informant where and from whom he learned a

song, story, or process. If he says he doesn't know, record that answer.

5. Write down the gathered information as soon as possible; do not rely on instant recall.
6. Record information in the exact words of the informant, making no attempts to edit for grammar or in any other way correct the original. A tape recording, carefully transcribed, is probably most accurate. Photographs to accompany the text are also useful.
7. When the informant speaks in a language other than English, record the information if at all possible in the language spoken. Then transcribe, if necessary, into English.
8. Devise a simple yet systematic method of record keeping and be certain everyone working on the project understands how the method works.

For the teacher who feels uncertain about how to proceed in the field of folk studies, a number of excellent references are available. National publications such as the *Journal of American Folklore*, regional journals such as *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, and the publications of state, county, and local historical societies are helpful. *The Study of American Folklore* by Jan H. Brunvand (W. W. Norton, 1968), Kenneth Goldstein's *A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore* (Gale Research, 1964), and *American Folklore* by Richard Dorson (University of Chicago, 1959) are basic works which the teacher will find useful.

With the present interest in electives at the secondary level, the study of folklore is a natural selection. An attractive aspect of using folk studies in the academic program is that no ready-made plans or programmed units exist. Instead, the teacher and his students work together to develop their own approaches in accord with the cultural composition of the class and the community in which the students live. Every student can contribute, and the potential for writing, speaking, and acting activities is high. Carry-over into other subject fields is natural and helps to foster increased emphasis upon interdisciplinary studies.

FOLK TALES

There are folk tales to be found in recorded form and they are better that way than in printed form. Folk tales were and are an oral form of literature. Putting them into print is like embalming them.

G. Howard Poteet
Essex County College
Newark, New Jersey

Sandra Fischer presents group interaction techniques for fostering understanding of self, values and decision making, and the nature of the communication process. Materials stem from a group dynamics unit developed by the American literature teaching team at East Noble High School, Kendallville, Indiana.

SANDRA FISCHER

SCHEMES FOR DISCUSSION GROUPS

The English classroom, particularly one devoted to the teaching of literature, lends itself naturally to the development of interaction skills. It is here that students can learn to "read" nonverbal messages, which are so often in direct contrast to what is being said aloud and which are frequently more effective than words in communicating feelings. It is in this classroom that students can reveal how they feel about themselves, others, or the world about them through open-ended discussions and interaction exercises. The English classroom is a natural setting for the use of discussion techniques which allow students to develop their own senses of the relevancy of literature to the real world.

Interaction exercises especially suited to English classrooms are those which help students get acquainted when forming new groups, help students relate to the subject matter in personal ways, or provide practice in discussion skills.

The following exercise is helpful in starting a new group or in units related to the theme of identity. It is suitable for students in grades three through twelve and can be used in classes with as many as thirty students.

Identity Reflection

PROCEDURE: Create a design, picture, or message which reveals something about your identity.

ANALYSIS: After everyone has completed their designs, have them show them to the group and explain how they reflect who they are. Discuss related questions such as: What does the uniqueness of the designs say about identity? Is what we do who we are? Is how we look who we are?

The next exercise was created by Stuart Atkins and Thatcher Allen for the National Training Laboratories Institute; it is designed for starting groups, concluding groups, or for taking group inventories.

Preparticipation Self-analysis

PROCEDURE: Allow group members time to fill in their responses to each of the groups of four statements. Share responses in ten-minute interaction periods between foursomes.

1. When I enter a new group, I feel _____
2. When a group starts, I _____
3. When people first meet me, they _____
4. When I'm in a new group, I feel most comfortable when _____

Ten minutes for interaction

5. When people remain silent, I feel _____
6. When someone does all the talking, I _____
7. I feel most productive when a leader _____
8. I feel annoyed when the leader _____

Ten minutes

9. I feel withdrawn when _____
10. In a group, I am most afraid of _____
11. When someone feels hurt, I _____
12. I am hurt most easily when _____

Ten minutes

13. I feel loneliest in a group when _____
14. Those who really know me think I am _____
15. I trust those who _____
16. I am saddest when _____

Ten minutes

17. I feel closest to others when _____
18. People like me when I _____
19. Love is _____
20. I feel loved most when _____

Ten minutes

21. If I could do it all over again _____
22. My greatest strength is _____
23. I could be _____
24. I am _____

Ten minutes

In using the exercise above to start high school groups, the teacher may wish to use only the first few statements, as the latter ones can reveal depths of feelings which a new group or inexperienced teacher may find

hard to handle. Groups using this exercise should be limited in size to work effectively; those ranging between six and fifteen would work well.

An example of an exercise directly related to a literature unit on science fiction or the theme of values follows. It involves decision making as an individual and as a group member. It could be used in the discussion of such stories as Bradbury's "The Flying Machine" or Van Tilburg Clark's "The Portable Phonograph."

Populating a New Planet

PROCEDURE: Using the following information make an individual decision; then, using consensus, make a group decision.

SITUATION: A nuclear war which will annihilate the entire human race is about to occur. Your country has developed a rocket ship which can take only three passengers, in addition to its three-member crew, to another planet. You are a member of a special task force which must select the three passengers from the following list. Assuming that each is an expert in his field, rank the three you would send in order of their value in starting a new society. One of the crew members, the poet, and the educator are females; the rest are males.

An atomic scientist
A doctor (general practitioner)
A military genius
A political statesman
A Christian evangelist
A social psychologist
A musical composer
A poet
A business magnate
An educator
An inventor of intricate mechanisms
A court justice

ANALYSIS: Allow the group to discuss their choices and to form a consensus as to which three should be taken. Discuss how the choices made both by individuals and the group reflect the values placed on society's members and their roles.

The decision-making exercise just described is also good for observing group processes in arriving at a consensus. Using the teacher or other students as observers who give non-judgmental feedback to the group on how it functioned can help the group evaluate the effectiveness of the interaction process. This exercise is best suited for groups of fifteen or less and for junior high and high school level students.

The next problem exercise helps students understand the importance of the two-way communication process of relating a problem and listening to one. The purpose of the third member is to help develop observation

skills and to provide valuable feedback for the members presenting and receiving the problem. A videotape recording of the interaction also could be used to provide valuable feedback.

PROCEDURE: Form the class into clusters of three and have each member assume one of the following roles: problem giver, problem adviser, and observer. These roles will be interchanged so that each person will serve in each role.

STAGE 1: The problem giver is to present a problem to the adviser. The problem may or may not be related to the class or school, but it must be one with which he thinks the adviser can help. The adviser's role is to listen to the problem silently. The observer listens silently.

STAGE 2: The adviser restates the problem before offering advice. This must be done to the satisfaction of the problem giver. He then proceeds to offer a solution to the problem. The problem giver may interact with the adviser in this stage to clarify his statement of the problem, but he is to listen silently to the solution presentation. The observer continues his silent role.

STAGE 3: The observer makes notations on an observation sheet provided him and reveals these to the giver and adviser. His feedback should reflect the process in a non-judgmental way as he saw it. He is not concerned with offering a solution to the problem or an opinion of how it could have been stated, but to describe the interaction which took place. The problem giver and adviser listen silently.

ANALYSIS: All triad members should discuss what happened in the session to see how their communications skills could be improved. Questions such as the following can be used: Was it easy or difficult to state the problem without receiving verbal response? Did the adviser hear what you thought you said? Did you have difficulty in listening to others and trying to formulate your thoughts at the same time? Were you frustrated when you had to remain silent?

The exercises that have been presented are examples of those that can be used in the classroom. Teachers may wish to develop others. Further information about interaction techniques may be obtained from the paperback titled *Self-Awareness through Group Dynamics.* Two other sources, primarily devoted to discussion skills but adaptable to literature units as well, are *Ten Interaction Exercises for the Classroom* and *Learning Discussion Skills through Games.* Additional information about these and other sources of information follows.

References

Atkins, Stuart, and Allen, Thatcher. "The Micro-lab/Mass-large Group." *Human Relations Training News* (Washington, D.C.: National Training Laboratories, Learning Resources Corporation, 1967).

Borton, Terry. *Reach, Touch and Teach.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970.
Brown, George I. *Human Teaching for Human Learning.* New York: Viking Press, 1971.
Mathes, George E. *Group Dynamics for Student Activities.* Washington, D.C.: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1968.
Mial, Dorothy J., and Jacobson, Stanley. *Ten Interaction Exercises for the Classroom.* Washington, D.C.: National Training Laboratories, Learning Resources Corporation, 1970.
Mill, Cyril, ed. *Ten Exercises for Trainers.* Washington, D.C.: National Training Laboratories, Learning Resources Corporation, 1969.
Reichert, Richard. *Self-Awareness through Group Dynamics.* Dayton, Ohio: George A. Pflaum, 1970.
Stanford, Gene, and Stanford, Barbara Dodds. *Learning Discussion Skills through Games.* New York: Citation Press, 1969.
Thelen, Herbert A. *Dynamics of Groups at Work.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.
Toffler, Alvin. *Future Shock.* New York: Random House, 1970.

GIVE AND TAKE

As children become involved in pantomime, dramatization, puppetry, debate, and role playing, they work, play, and create with others. They learn communication skills that are necessary in organizing, planning, and producing. The child learns both to accept and to give constructive criticism. Each one has an opportunity to evaluate his own ideas and those of others and then to develop the ideas expressed. Success as well as failure is shared.

Children involved in creative dramatic activities can flirt with various thoughts and ideas, meander through new adventures. Reactivated senses readily respond to produce new worlds, new creations for them to explore, to tinker with, to enjoy. Then, as each child becomes increasingly aware of the fact that he can release his thoughts and feelings, though in another guise, and contribute these to the group or class, his feelings about himself are enhanced: his own needs and concerns are more clearly delineated and he is better able to perceive and understand those of others. These are the most important understandings that he will learn.

Judy Mitchell
Fountain Valley
California

COMPOSITION SITUATIONS

Pulitzer Prize winning editorial writer Donald M. Murray describes the sequence of prewriting, writing, and rewriting through which the writer passes as he "attempts to discover through writing what he has to say." The author is a professor of English at the University of New Hampshire.

DONALD M. MURRAY

THE WRITING PROCESS

You can introduce your students to the writing process tomorrow through these simple exercises. You may want to have your students use half-sheets of paper or 4 x 6 cards.

1. Invite your students to think of a person, place, or event they feel strongly about. Have them write down specific details about their subject. Encourage them to brainstorm, suspend critical judgment, and forget about formal sentences. Just put down details in single words or clusters of words—proper names, quotations, colors, sounds, smells, tastes, textures. Tell them to do it quickly without being critical of their own work. (Allow fifteen minutes for this part of the exercise.) To illustrate:

grandmother
stroke
left side
wispy white hair
back-scratcher to reach things on bed
slurred speech
forgot time
not afraid to die
curled left hand
heavy to lift up in bed
still tried to sing hymns
plaid shawl from Scotland
bell to ring for help
dark room in morning
2 alarm clocks to wake me
cold in morning
listening for her breathing
loved tea
breathing? Is she alive?
up early for paper route

2. Now tell your students to reveal the subject to their reader through a few sentences. They should use the best specifics to build these sentences, and they may add new specifics if some occur to them. They can write nonfiction, fiction, poetry, description, exposition—

whatever is appropriate to their subject. (This activity should take only five minutes.)

> It takes two alarm clocks to wake me up. I have a morning paper route. It's cold and dark, and the first thing I do is go to Grandmother's room. To see if she's still alive.

3. Now your students can have the fun of rearranging the specifics in their sentences to clarify what they have discovered about their subject so that a reader will understand it. Again, they can add new specifics, or even change or modify the subject. (This activity should take ten minutes.)

> it is dark and
> When I get up for my paper route in the morning, I stop
> listening. been
> outside my grandmother's room. She's ~~had a stroke and~~ was
> it is my duty to
> paralyzed since I was eight. Every morning, ~~I~~ stop outside
> her hear She wants to die,
> ~~my~~ door and listen to ~~see~~ if she is breathing. ~~I am happy~~
> but I am not sad
> when I hear her.

In the first step, students were *prewriting* by gathering raw materials together. The writer gathers these materials by performing research, asking questions, observing, remembering, absorbing. He is aware—consciously and subconsciously—of his world. As he works with the symbols of that world—words—certain specifics connect with each other, and he begins to feel a curiosity, an itch to learn more about his subject, a hint of what he has to say.

How does he scratch this itch and find out more about his subject? By writing about it. Elie Wiesel says, "I write in order to understand as much as to be understood." Writing is finding out what you have to say.

Help students realize that in the second step they were *writing*. They committed themselves to a draft, an experiment. They made an attempt at meaning. This commitment is a crucial step in the writing process, and some writers feel at the end of this stage that they have really begun to write.

Finally, in the third step students were *rewriting*, the process of discovery continued. This was not punishment for a draft that wasn't finished but a normal part of the process of developing and clarifying meaning, and it contained the exciting search for the true word.

This sequence of prewriting, writing, and rewriting may be called a Cycle of Craft, through which the writer passes again and again as he

attempts to discover through writing what he has to say.

This process of writing improvement has some important educational implications:

1. *Students write.* A curriculum based on the writing process should be activity-centered with an emphasis on writing in a workshop climate.
2. *A process-centered classroom.* Students need time to explore their world with language to discover meaning. They need time to work from unsuccessful through increasingly successful drafts.
3. *Motivation by discovery.* Encouragement should be given to students to explore their own life space, to discover meaning, to find self-respect, to be authorities on their own lives.
4. *All forms of writing are allowed.* The process is essentially the same for all forms of writing and, as the process is practiced, students will explore different forms to serve as vehicles to convey feelings and thoughts.
5. *The text is the student's own writing.* Writing in process is the focus: writing which is unfinished, full of potential, capable of evolving. The students read each other's papers in process to help discover and communicate meaning more fully. The teacher also responds, usually in conference, confirming or discussing the student's evaluation of his own work.
6. *Grades.* If grading is necessary, it is recommended that students not be evaluated on drafts but on final works, those papers which each chooses to submit for consideration at the end of the term.

The steps and implications relating to the writing process can be introduced in one or two sessions and then practiced, with teacher involvement, in many different ways to satisfy the needs and interests of all the students.

PEER TUTORS

How effective is peer tutoring? Responded one tutor in our program: "Helping another student made me better. I got better in my own studies, and I got better in working with people. Of course, the kids I helped got better too!"

Steve Arnold
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois

Phyllis Martin Lang describes how she attempts to develop students' own personal voices in their writing activities. She teaches in the English Department of MacMurray College, Jacksonville, Illinois.

PHYLLIS MARTIN LANG

DEVELOPING THE PERSONAL VOICE

On the first day of class I give each student, his eyes closed, an orange. They are asked to examine it with every sense except sight, then visually to examine it, compare it with other oranges, peel it, reexamine it, and finally eat it. Then I ask each to write me a letter about himself and his orange. Some letters relate sensual and emotional reactions; others recall earlier experiences. But the responses are personally and uniquely conveyed.

Throughout the semester varied methods permit development of this personal voice. Some weeks we write five minutes daily. (I join the students in each of these writing periods; my personal voice also becomes more apparent.) Other weeks we write once for half an hour. Sometimes I suggest a word as a starting point or bring objects or photographs to class; sometimes I establish no direction. The only rule is that each of us should write, allowing the personal voice to escape.

Because these assignments are highly personal, I promise the students that I will never discuss any of the comments in class. Nor will I discuss any remarks with the student unless he initiates the conversation. But I do keep each student's writings in a folder and return them at the end of the semester. For some students these freely written papers (which I do not grade) become diaries of daily concerns. Some experiment with writing styles; others review movies or records or lectures.

Many students are skeptical and unwilling at the beginning of the semester. But they become more relaxed and open as they realize that I am not making judgments upon their words. And their writing reflects that openness: they attempt to express complicated emotions and re-

sponses, playing with words, finding pleasure in language, and delighting in the freedom which grows from frequent expression. Several students have commented that these personal writings are the most valuable (and sometimes the most difficult) portion of the course. Removal of traditional critical restraints on grammar and structure allows them to feel the joy of creation, the complete control of one's own writing. For some students, appreciation for literature increases as they too feel the frustration of finding precise words to convey perceptions of the world.

From my view as teacher, these personal writings serve several purposes. I discover distinguishing characteristics in my students; these writings help me to know them better as persons. Students perceive me in a different role as well. I am not just concerned about their answering questions and writing themes; I am also concerned about the voice which conveys distinct dimensions of their personalities. The resistance to writing themes also lessens because the themes become another means of expression, not the entire focus of the class.

These early sessions on the personal and reflective voice are followed by attention to the objective and critical voice and then to the even more complex oral interpretive voice in the next semester. These three voices provide several alternatives for self-expression: the personal and reflective voice emphasizes emotional and sensual responses; the critical and objective voice involves conveying ideas persuasively; and the oral interpretive voice synthesizes these other two voices as the students respond to works of literary merit.

WRITING IMPROVEMENT

One of the best ways to improve the preparation of teachers in composition, and at the same time improve the teaching ability of college instructors and the writing ability of college students, is for faculty members and student teachers to work as colleagues, not only in teaching but also in designing courses.

James E. Davis and Glenn Jambor
Ohio University
Athens, Ohio

Short exercises in describing what the senses feel can be a way not only of fostering the concept of awareness, but also of creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect in creative writing classes. Marlam Karnish teaches at Port Washington High School, Wisconsin.

MARLAM KARNISH

A CLIMATE FOR CREATIVITY

Each semester some twenty-five students walk into each of my four creative writing classes. There are no prerequisites for the course except that the student know how to write a sentence. They are a mixed bag of tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders. They represent all ability levels. Strangers to one another and to me, reserved, inhibited, shy, wary—the barriers are up. In the first week or two I must set the tone for the semester and create an environment of mutual trust and respect where ideas can be exchanged. Making no claim to originality, I am willing to share my eclectic approach, which should work as well in a unit in a traditional class as in an introduction to an elective course in creative writing.

Although creativity involves all the senses, sight is the one which students rely on the most. The first day, therefore, revolves around the sense of sight. Using the opaque projector, I project pictures upon the screen. Larger than life, they dominate the room. The students are asked to respond to each picture in any way they can. Words, sentences, fragments, paragraphs, poetry, random jottings—all are acceptable. I call this a free response. The pictures, taken from magazines, vary: a cartoon of a boy with a black eye, a photograph of a bird in flight, a photograph of two girls laughing hysterically. Each picture elicits different emotional responses. I allow about ten minutes per picture for writing time.

After each response is completed, I collect the papers and quickly read through them, starring those which, in my judgment, are the best. I don't expect too much at this point; an insight, a metaphor, an accurate phrase or poetic expression, a well-chosen word—these eye-catching things are starred. We share during the last fifteen minutes. While the

picture is again projected, I read a montage of impressions from the students' writings. Students enjoy hearing what others have written and are surprised at the different interpretations.

The realization that people see things differently and uniquely is strengthened in the next session. After the students have settled themselves, taken out a sheet of paper, and written *Response Two—Listening* on the paper, I direct their attention to the board, where the following instructions have been written:

The Art of Listening

Listen carefully. As the room gets quiet, write sentences similar to the following:

I hear _____
Outside, the (a) _____
Someone is _____

Vary your sentences. After each sentence, ask a question or make a positive statement:

I hear the teacher's heels clicking. I wish she'd sit down; *or*
I wonder if she is reading over my shoulder?

Students become aware of sounds they never noticed before: the clicking of the clock (I wonder what the cafeteria's serving today), the jangling of bracelets, the hum of the highway off in the distance (Where are they going?), the scratchings of pencils and erasers (Joan just made a mistake). By having to respond to each sound, the students become involved. After the papers are collected we discuss some of the things they heard. None have heard exactly the same things. Many are amazed at how much they missed. Did someone sneeze? Was a locker opened? Did you really hear the wind knocking the metal clasp against the flagpole? We listen. Yes, there it is!

The next day I read some of the best writings to the class. I try to find something positive about each paper. Students are rewarded by hearing a portion of their papers read. It should be noted here that these papers are not graded and no one knows the writer: the reward is personal satisfaction.

We continue exploring the necessity of responding to all our senses. This time the students respond to music. On the board are written the following instructions:

Sound Also Reflects Mood

As each selection is played, write what you feel, what the music reminds you of, or any other spontaneous reaction you may have.

I try to select music that has a variety of moods, including at least one

in a very modern rock style as well as semi-classical "mood" pieces, depending on what is available at the moment. Students respond well to the overture from the rock opera *Tommy* by The Who and to the drum solo from "In-A-Godda-Da-Vida" by The Iron Butterfly. One of my favorites is Milton Babbit's "Ensembles for Synthesizer, Part One." Strictly electronic, spaced-out, futuristic—most of the students have never heard anything like it before. They seem to sense mechanization, regimentation, a forbidding space-age future. I've gotten some interesting responses with it. For example:

> Automatic everything!!
> Automatic machines make
> Automatic answers.
> Automatic transportation makes
> Automatic death by an
> Automatic accident. Can we stop
> Automatic Everything
> Automatically?
>
> *D. Racer*

Here is one student's response to Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 in c minor:

> Torridly wild music which you could go absolutely crazy or sit down on a Sunday afternoon and sip fine wines and munch on crackers.

Scheherazade provoked this response:

> Like strolling through a park in May—wonderful, wonderful, wonderful.

It is important to carefully select in advance the portions of the record which you intend to use and not play the entire record. One mood should predominate. If necessary, play one small portion over and over again until the students have exhausted their imaginations.

The papers are collected, starred, and read to the class the next day. Before the class period ends, I announce that we are going to pop popcorn tomorrow. By now the students are filled with good will and humor. They are beginning to feel "creative."

I can think of nothing that smells better than popcorn. It produces mouth-watering sensations and conjures up many pleasant memories. The newest poppers also have clear tops, so that the process can be observed. There is childlike delight in seeing the first kernel burst open and bombard the lid. Needless to say, the students enjoy this assignment and respond in a variety of ways. The practical ones may describe the process, others

pretend they are a kernel of corn and write in the first person. Some write in prose, others in poetry. Students exchange and reexchange papers so that each paper is read at least three times. The rest of the period is spent reading papers and eating popcorn.

The fifth response involves the sense of touch. I have gathered together various household items: clothespins, buttons, bottle caps, erasers, ribbons, stones, etc. Each item is placed in a paper bag. The class is divided into two teams and each student is given a bag. He is instructed *not* to look inside the bag and to write as accurate a description as he can without naming the item. Usually the student can guess what it is, but he is not allowed to look until the description is completed. The urge to look is difficult to resist, which points out how much we rely on our sense of sight to verify what we already know through our other senses.

The teams face each other and, as a student reads his description, one member of the opposite team tries to guess what it is. What no one notices is that by now everyone is reading his own writing in front of a group of friendly critics.

Finally, students combine their powers of observation by describing the classroom. Using the article "Autobiography: The Gold of Writing Power" by Don M. Wolfe (*English Journal*, October 1971) as my model, I write on the board:

1. Name the month and time of day
2. Name at least four colors
3. What is your teacher doing at the moment?
4. Use the name of at least one person who is in the room. What is he doing?
5. As you write, what do you touch?
6. As you listen, what do you hear?
7. As you write, what do you smell?
8. Vary your sentence patterns.

Suggested length, one and one-half pages.

The papers are collected, starred, and the following day the best examples are read. Students tend to be stirred by sensitivity and creativity, and they appreciate having an audience.

The fundamental concept of awareness, using the five senses, has been fostered. Free-response writing is used frequently throughout the semester. It complements more structured writing assignments and helps students find their "real" selves, the selves that some did not even know. None of these students is likely to earn a cent as a professional writer. But if creative writing can help each student develop a positive self-image, an appreciation for his surroundings, and skill in expressing himself, then that is enough reward.

Getting students to abandon abstract descriptions of states of mind in favor of showing feelings in concrete terms is often difficult. Ways of communicating the difference to students are suggested by Barbara Kirkpatrick, Santa Fe Community College, Gainesville, Florida.

BARBARA KIRKPATRICK

SHOW AND TELL IN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

Elementary school teachers for years have used the device of show and tell. By the time youngsters mature and enter high school or college, though, they seem to have forgotten this invaluable first grade lesson. At least most students *tell* everything in their writing; they forget that we also want to be *shown.*

To remind students about writing descriptively, ask them to select one of the following words:

agony	disappointed	melancholic	sensible
angry	elated	miserable	shallow
ardent	enthusiastic	moody	shrewd
arrogant	fearful	passionate	shy
bland	festive	placid	silly
callow	frenzied	pompous	spirited
compassionate	frivolous	priggish	suffering
complaisant	gay	prim	tender
contemplative	grouchy	proud	tormented
contemptible	happy	prudent	tranquil
crude	harassed	reckless	troubled
defeated	haughty	resigned	uncouth
delicate	humble	revengeful	vicious
depressed	immature	sad	violent
despondent	joyous	seductive	wild

Then ask each to write a scene or description of a character which *shows* that word without actually using it or any of its synonyms. The object is to make the reader see the character or to know what the character feels without the writer having to *tell* him. Caution students against the easy way out: using cliches. It is easy to write "her shoulders slumped" for

"defeated"—so easy that it's not worth doing.

A student drawing the word *silly* might write something like this:

> "Come on Fred," said Joe. "We have a job to do." Fred had bought a six-pack for lunch. No food, just beer. Now, when their lunch hour was over, Fred was beginning to feel pretty good. Now, Fred thought, a few practical jokes would be amusing. He started out by locking the foreman in one of the portable outhouses that are always around at construction sites, then he went around putting raw eggs in the seats of his friends' cars. "You're already in trouble with the boss, probably out of a job, now are you trying to lose your friends too?" Joe was trying to get him to come to his senses. Fred just snickered to himself as he thought of another joke to try.
>
> *Dennis Willingham*

Students may then read their papers while others try to identify the word being shown. If the student has *shown* the word accurately enough, his classmates will have no trouble identifying it. If he has become abstract and tried to *tell* about the word, the loss of effectiveness will be very noticeable. The exercise thus provides students with immediate feedback from their peers regarding the success of their writing.

For follow-up exercises students can each select a word (from the list or elsewhere) and then show the meaning of the word through one well-written sentence, as Flannery O'Conner does in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find":

> Bailey didn't look up from his reading so she wheeled around then and faced the children's mother, a young woman in slacks, whose face was as broad and innocent as a cabbage and was tied around with a green headkerchief that had two points on the top like rabbit's ears.

In one sentence Flannery O'Connor has *shown* us the mother and created a strong characterization.

A summary of the exercises can be provided by selecting some *well-shown* passages from the textbook or from other writers and letting the class discuss how that writer went about showing rather than telling.

Some telling, as we learned in grade school, is always necessary, but no matter what the genre of writing, if the reader isn't also shown, the writing will be flat and boring.

Ruth Optner describes how she uses collage making in her creative writing classes to foster understanding of point of view, organization, and the effectiveness of details. She teaches at California State University, Northridge.

RUTH L. OPTNER

A VISUAL AID TO WRITING IMPROVEMENT

Students entering college have been nurtured on the pap of television, numbed by the blast of hi-fi's, and desensitized to soft sounds and fine print by billboards, posters, strobe lights, and amplified acid rock. If the medium is the message, the messages they receive are in vivid technicolor and loud sound. Their primary mode of personal communication is the telephone. Writing is a mode of communication they avoid. We English teachers, grounded on principles of rhetoric, need to be aware of our changing student audience. Overwhelming them with words, either to read or to write, may be a form of culture shock that turns them off.

Our problem is what to do in the classroom. One solution is to introduce a communication medium to which students can react. Collage is such a medium. An assemblage of pictures and words, it is both visual and verbal in its structure. Its glossy objective presence in the classroom stimulates looking, reacting, speaking, and listening—elements of communication on many levels.

The following assignment can be shaped to fit many curriculum needs. Its two parts are collage and writing, thus connecting what we see to what we write. To present the initial assignment, show picture-word combinations that convey a message. Student work is best, but in the absence of student work, show ads that rely on visual metaphors wherein objects suggest attributes. For example, the "What's New Pussycat?" slogan heads the ad for Instant Pussycat Mix and Early Times Bourbon. Read aloud a part of the copy: "This sunny, orange-sweet sour makes you want to purr. And mixes up quick as a cat." Show the picture of the glowing glass of brew, with a cat's tail wagging from behind it. Let the

students suggest what else *pussycat* stands for, adjusting the interchange to their own level of sophistication.

As students make their collages, they will experience the process of discovery through reaction. To enhance the discovery process, advise them to let the pictures suggest an idea, then clip other pictures and words that enlarge the idea. Have them arrange these on cardboard backing. Pictures may be cropped to have interesting shapes or overlapped to show movement or interaction. Space left around pictures can show emphasis; words can be used as bridges or arrows. When a definite effect has been achieved, have them glue the pieces in place. From this exercise, students sense how words and pictures can be organized to suggest ideas meaningfully.

Now have each student select one facet of America as he himself sees it. We define that point of view in terms of the many roles each of us enacts. Our roles determine the way we interpret events around us. To reinforce the concept of *role*, I list on the board some of my roles: wife, mother, daughter, sister, teacher, friend, volunteer, consumer. I then pick a topic, such as women's liberation, and show how my collage might reflect my roles of wife, mother, and college teacher. A male student in the class would treat the same topic from a different viewpoint, perhaps as son, boyfriend, jilted lover, etc.

Students then write paragraphs to accompany their collages, paragraphs which summarize the pictures in words and which show how they expressed their particular roles. One collage shows ads from magazines assembled in booklet form. The text reads:

> One basic characteristic of the "American Way of Life" is the exploitation of women as sex symbols. This is evident in our advertising, in fashion, in employment, and in many other facets of American society. An outsider, looking at our culture, would get the impression that American women are easily attainable if you bait them with the proper products, such as expensive perfume, big cars, fancy restaurants, and romantic music. And women really swoon when the man in their life uses the right aftershave lotion, dresses fashionably, licks his dandruff problem, and doesn't have bad breath.

Transforming the pictures to words induces the students to be specific and to use concrete language to explain general statements.

After the individual creative collage and writing effort comes the act of communication, sharing the works with others in the class for their evaluations. The student shows his collage to the class, and class members react, each telling what the collage means to them. Disagreement emerges. The student then reads his explanatory paragraph, and class members

again react, commenting on how the description did or did not express the ideas contained in the collage. The student answers questions or defends himself, becoming part of the interchange.

The following excerpt from a student evaluation of my course shows one benefit the exercise had:

> . . . I was blind to see (then) that it was supposed to be an exercise in organization. I thought about how well organized it was and then I realized what you were trying to show me all along. The collage was an exercise in organization. I figured if I could organize my thoughts with cutouts, why couldn't I express myself in my own writing? And so I began applying the above philosophy to my writing.

In summary, collage is a means for increasing communication within the classroom as well as a medium for helping the student transform what he sees into what he writes. It is a bridge to writing and a strategy for teaching composition. It is also a bridge to speaking and listening, opening up the students to themselves and to one another.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Give each student a photograph with the instructions that he describe, as accurately as he can, what the picture contains. Encourage one or two good paragraphs rather than comments on every possible aspect of the photo. The papers will reveal each student's ability in composition. Since the papers are brief and delimited, they can be read and marked quickly. When the class meets for its second session, each student can see how he stands and where his strengths and weaknesses lie.

If we use the same photograph and the same assignment with the same student again toward the end of the semester, we can compare the results. . . .

Leonard Williams
Phillips County Community College
Helena, Arkansas

Students write enthusiastically about themselves when they describe imaginative journeys taken in class. Judith Deemer teaches at the Niles West High School in Skokie, Illinois.

JUDITH H. DEEMER

TAKING FANTASY TRIPS

Here is the procedure which I follow for fantasy journeys, which we take at strategic times between intensive literature units. First I ask each student to choose a member of the class whom he trusts and to sit beside this person. Then I say to them:

> I'm going to ask you to close your eyes, put your heads down on your desks, and relax. Then I'll make suggestions for you to follow in your imaginations. When I've finished talking, I'll ask you to rest quietly and, when you're ready, to open your eyes and share your fantasy journey with the friend next to you. When you have heard each other's fantasies, write down all the details of your fantasy.

I remind the class that absolute silence is necessary to ensure concentration. When I can see that they are calm, I begin the specific fantasy journey I have selected. For example, here is a fantasy journey which works well with many sophomores.

> Now imagine that you are a motorcycle. . . . What kind of motor-

material deleted due to copyright restrictions

material deleted due to copyright restrictions

details of your existence as a motorcycle. . . .*

After the students have rested for a few minutes, I ask them to open their eyes, raise their heads when they are ready, and quietly tell all the details of their journey to the person sitting beside them. When the talking stops, I ask the students to write their fantasies down. One boy writes:

> I am in the junk yard. No one will by me. When people come they steal some of my parts and they take my tires. and somebody take me to there lot and took some parts then threw me in the river.

One girl observed that her rider "doesn't really care about me. He does anything he pleases to me." From another boy:

> My driver treats me mean. He rides over anything, even patches of glass, and tacks. . . . And at night they park you in a dark and dirty garage with chains & locks all over you. Nobody knows if you are hurt or need a new part, my rider says he will ride me until I can't move.

Still another student:

> I am a 350 Honda. I'm always used day or night by a 18 dropout dope dealer. Every hour he hops on me to make another deal. And then he has the nearve to hide the dope on me. But I love him because he take good care of me. . . . my owner shines me, fixes me, and makes sure people don't rip me off.

The students' papers are truly exciting to me because of the eagerness with which they write them, because of the amount of personal revelation in them, and because of the attention to details in many of the papers. Fantasy journeys have the potential for helping students gain insight into themselves, and they provide a different, absorbing, unifying, imaginative classroom experience.

---

*From *Awareness*, by John O. Stevens. © 1971 Real People Press.

Students will themselves discover the strengths and weaknesses of their writing during this exercise in giving accurate, detailed directions. Gilbert Prince is an assistant professor of English at California State University, Chico.

GILBERT PRINCE

MAP WRITING

The plan of this writing exercise is to have students journey imaginatively from a given departure point to a specific destination by carefully following an intricate route on a detailed map. The teacher designs and distributes copies of the map. For best results, the map should contain, in addition to a prescribed route, a number of landscape features: a row of trees, a pond, a creek, a farmhouse complete with barn and silo, a bridge, and so on. All of these features can function as landmarks in the imaginative journey. The more complex the map, the more challenging the writing assignment.

The teacher then pairs off all his students. All the A's study the map carefully to determine how best to describe the journey in as accurate a way as possible. When the A's complete their written descriptions of the route, they hand them over to the B's. The B's, who have not seen the original, attempt to reproduce the map by relying solely on the written descriptions supplied them by their respective partners. In other words, it is the responsibility of the B's to reconstruct the map as completely as the verbal rendition allows them.

Since both A's and B's have had a hand in translating the original map, they try to determine the degree to which they accurately and clearly reproduced the original, identifying the specific problems each encountered. The students themselves can usually discover the strengths and weaknesses of their own renditions. After each pair satisfactorily resolves the writing problems, the assignment can be repeated by reversing the roles for the students and by providing another map for a new imaginative journey.

Ways of presenting the concept of metaphor to students are presented, together with suggested exercises for discussing, creating, and comparing metaphors, by Ronald Raybin, Pasadena High School, Pasadena, California.

RONALD RAYBIN

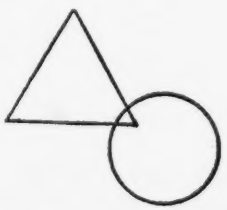
WRITING METAPHORICALLY

If each of your students has a magazine at his desk, none should have difficulty finding a host of metaphors, and few will encounter problems in making accurate interpretations of the figures of speech which abound in advertisements. Encouraging students to become aware of the ubiquity of metaphor is a first step toward teaching them its nature.

The presentation of a useful definition is an appropriate second step. "Metaphor" is used broadly here to include many types of figurative language, because it is not a precise labeling that is important but an awareness of the literal and implied meanings of a vivid, economical aspect of language. Here is a useful definition: *A metaphor compares a similar aspect (or aspects) of two different things.*

Explain that these comparisons are often questionable scientifically but are effective dramatically. It is not the startling differences between the two things being compared that should be considered but rather their similarities.

Then chalk the following on the board:



Shade in the small section where the circle and triangle overlap. Keep this drawing on the board for use as a visual reference, but don't actually

verbalize that it is *a metaphor for metaphor* or some students will get dizzy. Point out that the shaded area is a representation of what the two different geometrical figures share. Explain that, in like manner, when Harry refers to John as being "chicken," Harry does not intend to communicate that John is a feathered barnyard fowl that lays eggs. If you chalk the word "chicken" in the triangle and "John" in the circle and then point to the shaded area, few students will fail to note that the area of similarity is quite small and probably refers to the fearful nature of both. (Only context, of course, can establish the *precise* intention of a metaphor.)

At this juncture you might offer a simple formula which is an aid in an understanding of most metaphors: the (_____) of *(a thing we're familiar with)* is being likened to the (_____) of *(the thing being clarified)*. Whatever words are used for the first blank are repeated in the second, such as *fearfulness* in the above example. "A thing we're familiar with" and "the thing being clarified" are replaced, in the example, by *chicken* and *John* respectively.

Depending upon the composition and direction of the class, you may wish to point out that metaphors are usually not so simple that they deal with only one aspect of a comparison. A *sense metaphor* deals with empirical similarities: John running away from a threatening situation might actually have *looked* like a chicken as well as behaved as one. An *emotive metaphor* deals with a similarity between the feelings that a speaker has for a new situation and the one it is being compared to. Calling someone a "chicken" may refer to a similar feeling accorded to both. Some metaphors are multifaceted and deal with sense and emotion simultaneously.

Related to the above discussion are three sets of exercises presented in increasing order of difficulty. Invite students to use the fill-in-the-blanks formula (when it's relevant) as often as they wish for their explanations, referring to the drawing on the board to reinforce the concept of metaphor when discussing the class responses. Direct the class to jot down answers to the following questions:

1. If you refer to a young lady's pearly teeth, you don't mean that they are hard, round, and were formed in an oyster. What *could* you mean?
2. If you compare a white carnation to snow, what might the likeness be? Could it be something else?
3. If you compare a girl to snow, what might the similarity be? Could it be something else? Could it be two things at once?
4. If someone states, "Harold has eagle eyes," what *doesn't* it mean? What *could* it mean? (Optional: Are there any circumstances

under which the statement *could* mean what you said it *doesn't* mean?)

5. If someone compares a mountain to an ice-cream cone, what specifically is being compared?
6. If someone metaphorically says, "The good news was music to my ears," what is being compared? Use the formula to write your explanation.
7. To what might you compare a tooth?
8. To what might you compare someone who is thinking fast?
9. To what might you compare a broken umbrella?

After discussing the above and fielding related questions, students will enjoy discussing these metaphors:

1. The hand he held out for me to shake was a dead animal.
2. Mosquitos whined with bedspring spirals of sound.
3. A cat's cradle of wires caged the crowded street.
4. The out-of-tune car made noises like a firing squad.
5. The meeting was as carefully planned as a sneeze.
6. The shoe salesman was unable to fit her dinosaur feet.
7. He was sinking in the river of life.

For a final exercise, allow students the opportunity to create their own metaphors and to compare them to those of a literate, professional writer like Ray Bradbury. Students may begin this exercise by first considering the following two examples. (The metaphors in the two explanatory examples are mine; those that follow are from Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles* and *The Golden Apples of the Sun.*)

1. The papers were blown by the wind.
   The papers flapped in the wind like indecisive pigeons.
2. The cat meowed loudly in the night.
   The cat was a drunken soprano screeching an aria at the moon.

Observe with them that the first sentence of each pair states the point directly while the second sentence communicates essentially the same information but more colorfully and metaphorically. Then let students try rewriting in a metaphorical vein the following sentences which represent direct, non-metaphorical statements reduced from Bradbury's originals:

1. The housewives took off their fur coats.
2. Small petals fell down when the wind shook the leafy branches.
3. . . . the wrinkled people, the old people, came at last to Mars.
4. Each lower leg was powerful, a thousand pounds of white bone, surrounded by strong muscles. . . .
5. Its mouth gaped, exposing sharp teeth.
6. Its thick, scaled, green skin glittered.
7. The breath from the beast's mouth engulfed them. . . .
8. The silence was wonderful, helping her to sleep.

9. And for a few seconds you saw the white maggots . . . alive and moving, millions of them.

Twenty or thirty minutes should be enough time for most students to rewrite the sentences metaphorically. Be sure to indicate that such writing is a difficult creative process; their interest will be whetted by knowing that they are competing with Ray Bradbury. In the remaining time, students may wish to share their metaphorically rewritten sentences, comparing them to the Bradbury originals which follow:

1. The housewives shed their bear disguises.
2. Showers of petal snow sifted down when the wind touched the green branches.
3. . . . the dried apricot people, the mummy people, came at last to Mars.
4. Each lower leg was a piston, a thousand pounds of white bone, sunk in thick ropes of muscle. . . .
5. Its mouth gaped, exposing a fence of teeth like daggers.
6. Its armored flesh glittered like a thousand green coins
7. A windstorm from the beast's mouth engulfed them. . . .
8. The silence was like a cool hand, stroking her to sleep.
9. And for a few seconds you saw the white things like macaroni or noodles . . . alive and boiling up, millions of them.

These practices should move students to a heightened awareness of metaphors in poetry and prose written by themselves and others.

PUNS

More than likely derived from the Italian *puntiglio*, which means "fine point" or "verbal quibble," a pun has come to be identified as the lowest form of wit, even though Shakespeare, Homer, Joyce, and many other writers used it extensively. With the advent of television and the wider use of media in general, the pun appears to be emerging as an effective technique to attract attention and to elicit humor. So why not use it in the English classroom? Puns increase the student's ability to listen more carefully, and this important factor cannot be overlooked as one way of enhancing communication skills.

Adelio F. Maccentelli
Essex Community College
Baltimore County, Maryland

Roberta M. Palumbo describes how practice with sentence structures on a computer can help students increase the range of syntactic alternatives available to them and thus enhance the effectiveness of their writing. She teaches at Holy Names College, Oakland, California.

ROBERTA M. PALUMBO

COMPUTER-ASSISTED INSTRUCTION IN ADVANCED COMPOSITION

How can the computer assist students in learning how to write better? I am sure that others who like to write and who teach others to enjoy putting pencil to paper have wondered the same thing.

Recently, I have used the computer in my advanced composition class. The course focuses on developing a student's style and emphasizes sentence structure—how it contributes to individuality of expression and effectiveness of content. We examine many sentences—those by professional writers, those by my own students, past and present—taking them apart to see what gives them life. In this process I hope that students will become more enthusiastic about the possibilities of English syntax. I encourage them to follow the patterns of the sentences analyzed, to somehow work them into their viscera so that they will become a part of their storehouse of communication tools. In a sense, I am asking them to program themselves, to set up discs in their grey matter on which are encoded a variety of sentence structures that will, upon call, be appropriately connected to some "content" that they wish to communicate. I show them how they can "imitate" the model sentences, but without making specific assignments in this area I know that most students do not take the time to practice the patterns. I do not care to rigidify the writing process by forcing students to use these patterns in their essays. I just hope that they do. And some do. And, of course, some do not. Obviously they need more help, and this is where the computer offers its assistance.

I have a series of computer programs that ask the students to work through a two-part process: analysis and imitation. Although differing in specific approach, all the programs ask the student to first analyze the

structure of a model sentence and to break it down into its constituent parts. In a sense, the student draws a map of the structure, a means by which he can make his way through the sentence. After this map is established, he can then use it as a guide for the creation of his own sentence. The map thus has a dual function: it allows entrance into a new territory outside the student, and it allows him to discover new territory within himself. The structure has assisted him in formulating reality in a way he might not have attempted had he not been shown the way with a map that he himself had helped to construct. As one student commented, "Some of us have to go step by step through a process in order to learn it. I liked the experience."

Here is a student's "step by step" analysis and imitation.

Sample Program

Let's do an imitation of a stylistically interesting sentence—one that contains parallelism. Read this sentence aloud several times.

John Williamson, fifty-four, tall and handsome but a trifle loose in the jowls and red of eye, smiled and spoke.

Do you see the parallel adjectives/adjective phrases? List them.

fifty-four
tall and *handsome*
trifle loose in the jowls
red of eye

Now look for the parallel verbs. What are they?

smiled
spoke

Let's see if there is anything else of structural interest in this sentence. Notice that the parallel adjectives separate the subject and verb and interrupt the syntactical core of the sentence. Type the subject and verbs.

John Williamson
smiled
spoke

Do you see how they are separated by the adjectival interruption? If so, continue on. If not, study the sentence for a while. You have plenty of time.

In your own words describe the structure of the sentence.

subject plus parallel adjectives plus 2 verbs

Now you are ready to work on an imitation. Type a substitute for each of the adjectives.

fifty-four .....*fortyish*
tall .....*squat*

handsome .....*fleshy*
loose in the jowls .....*glinty eyed*
red of eye .....*lightning quick*
with fork and knife

Before you write your complete imitation, decide upon a subject.

Brunnhilde

Now write your verbs.

smiled
sat down

Does your sentence imitate the structure of the original? Let's see. Type the original sentence, using your adjectival interruption.

John Williamson, fortyish, squat and fleshy but glinty eyed and lightning quick with fork and knife, smiled and spoke.

Does the sentence make sense structurally? There may be some incongruity of content!

Yes

Well, let's try it the other way. Type the original using your subject and verbs.

Brunnhilde, fifty-four, tall and handsome but a trifle loose in the jowls and red of eye, smiled and sat down.

If you think that you have mastered this structure, go on to the next exercise. If not try this one again.

As will be noted from the sample, the computer does not check for right and wrong answers. In fact, there is no verification of what the student types. He is working completely on his own; the final check of his analysis comes in the accuracy of his imitation, and even then he alone determines if his sentence is a successful imitation of the original, if he has generated a sentence which has the structure of the model. If he is unsuccessful, he simply works through the exercise again, analyzing and creating anew without having his "wrong answers" hang before his eyes as he tries to look at the material with fresh vision. The computer will reproduce the same sentence and questions, taking the student through the process of analysis and creation as many times as he cares to try. Perhaps the student will choose to try a similar exercise. He does not have to worry about finding the right answer before he can go on to the next exercise. He is the judge of his own work. He can, however, go back over the computer read-out and examine his various attempts.

Although many of my students had never used a computer before and therefore felt uneasy about creating sentences at the computer terminals, most of them completed the exercises with a good deal of success. The programs have not been in use long enough to allow for extensive evalua-

tion, but it is apparent thus far that this individualized approach to sentence analysis and creation has merit. Each student is able to work at his own rate but with the guidance of questions which continually focus his attention on a particular part of the exercise. This dynamic quality of computer-assisted instruction involves the student in the learning process.

Another important advantage of these exercises is that they are done by the student on his own time outside the classroom. I have asked students to do this kind of exercise on the chalkboard in class, but it is difficult to study many sentences during a class period or to have many students participate. Also, there is the possibility of student embarrassment with this kind of classroom activity. The computer, however, offers anonymity and unlimited time while providing the student with something of the classroom learning situation—a question given after each of his responses to guide him to the next level of achievement.

The computer cannot be a teacher in the true sense of the word, but it can simulate one of a teacher's functions and therefore provide an atmosphere conducive to learning. Many students were happy that the programs were designed to reinforce material we had discussed in class, but others worried that this kind of exercise would replace classwork—a consequence they feared. Both of these responses supported my decision to use the computer as a supplement to rather than a replacement of classroom activities.

Computer-assisted writing instruction also gives the instructor opportunity in class to concentrate on more complex problems of style, since the student is working on the fundamentals by himself and is gaining a background necessary for more advanced work in composition. Classwork can become more interesting, and therefore students approach composition with greater enthusiasm.

LITERATURE

A way of reaching students through Robert Graves' poem "The Naked and the Nude" is related by Martin Tucker, professor of English at Long Island University (Zeckendorf Campus), Brooklyn.

MARTIN TUCKER

TEACHING A GRAVES TRUTH

In this age of consciousness we tend to forget about self-consciousness. Yet while students clothe their fear of nakedness in different figures of speech today, the educational closet dramas express much the same crises as in past generations.

I was thinking of this layer of walls between student and teacher when I walked into the classroom to expose one poem to them. To double the exposure I had chosen Robert Graves' "The Naked and the Nude" for observation.

Poetry is of course a word game, a play *of* words as well as *with* words. But in a game we are not truly natural: we adopt rules in a game, and we restrict our natures with prohibitions (no matter how nicely put).

Such are some of the concerns conveyed in "The Naked and the Nude." How to teach that poem! Does Robert Graves use words so differently from my students? Do I use them differently from them? from Graves?

In "The Naked and the Nude" Graves talks about the titillation of the senses. The "nude" are the sly ones, never totally unmasking themselves, always holding something back. The "naked" are the honest ones, like lovers who can "without reproach . . . gaze on bodies naked and ablaze." The nude use a trick of drapery to clothe "their dishabille in rhetoric." Graves admits the nudes win out against the nakeds in this world, but he prophesies that the nakeds will receive their just desserts in the next world when, rewarded for their total commitment to the honesty of nature, they will take pleasure in whipping the nudes into shape—naked shape, that is.

Graves, in his usual witty style, starts his poem with the admission that lexicographers have not recorded the difference between naked and nude, but he knows the two stand worlds apart in the fabric of appearance.

His concluding lines—the scene of the nakeds whipping the nudes—is his own sly wish to get back at the distorters of the word and the truth.

One of the basic approaches in teaching poetry is to start with the word as the reader uses it and then work to the line of the writer's usage and individual shaping. For my students, the problem was confounded: for them, naked meant something like skinny or a plucked chicken. The images that surfaced were of a medical examination, or of a nightmare alley sideshow. Initially, for them, the nude was far more preferable and a more conventionally acceptable term: it did not disturb their sense of exposure, and it conjured up the *Playboy* image.

When I asked them if they had ever heard of a magazine called *Naked*, they laughed. Then one of them suggested the title of a movie, *Naked City*, and of a book, *The Naked Eye;* another suggested the popular phrase, "naked truth." The suggestions led—where I could not—to what Graves was saying. When someone playfully voiced the phrase, "all the nudes that's fit to print," the meaning of the poem suddenly became illuminated and revealed.

Graves' poem is admittedly an "easy" one. Written with wit and tongue in cheek, it suggests a one-level, one-thought, one-moment apprehension of a vision. The poem is meant of course to reverberate so that the amusing idea of naked and nude as opponents in a world war of morality will be extended to all addresses of endeavor. However, two of the most difficult things to communicate in a classroom are morality and humor: they cannot, in my experience, be communicated frontally, directly. They have to seep in slowly.

Thus, even when the general idea of the poem was established, the "application" of it had to be suggested subtly. For example, how to communicate "dishabille in rhetoric," as Graves beautifully put it with the companion phrase, "draping by a showman's trick"? Graves was not talking about the coquette in her half-undressed state; he was imaging up, by association, all those people who misuse words badly, who tease and titillate and distort by their showy tricks of shading a word or phrase or wrenching it out of context.

For some, Graves could be talking about pornographers; for others, he might be talking about politicians, schoolteachers, priests, or even other writers. The important thing is to get the student reader to think of those worst of all possible worlds where the word is used to obscure the deeper sphere of naked, related Truths. By mentioning and discussing some modes of dress, undress, and address, I was able to suggest to them that a perfectly acceptable technique in writing and public speaking can become a trick of deception and self-deception of great and greater magni-

tude. A flick of the dress strap can lead in a parallel line to propaganda sprouted every day in the most sly and bold way, anywhere and everywhere.

When the class ended, a student came up and said, almost wistfully, "Why, the poem is a rip-off on the Establishment. . . ." Then, in a lower voice, he added, "It could be about my parents sometimes." I knew then that some communication between poet and reader had been achieved. It was not total, but it was a beginning. Which after all is what Graves is talking about: we do not go naked all at once, or all the time.

When it is time to introduce a unit of poetry, Betty Barbara Sipe takes students on a poetry tour. She teaches at the Mount Lebanon High School, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

BETTY BARBARA SIPE

POETRY AS KALEIDOSCOPE

On any typical spring day, as students enter my English classroom, they may listen to the melodic strains of *Love Is Blue* by A. Popp and P. Cour, played by Paul Mauriat and his orchestra; selections from a Burt Bacharach album; or any one of a number of contemporary hits by the favorite musical groups of our youth.

As the music fades, the students "listen up" to what follows: *Is this poetry?* But before students have an opportunity to answer, they may be greeted with a reading of Carl Sandburg's "Jazz Fantasia":

> DRUM on your drums, batter on your banjoes, sob on the long cool

material deleted due to copyright restrictions

> river hills . . . go to it, O jazzmen.[1]

Even though selections may vary from class to class, season to season,

1. From *Smoke and Steel* by Carl Sandburg, copyright, 1920, by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.; copyright, 1948, by Carl Sandburg. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

year to year, the appeal is to students' esthetic tastes: brief, witty, entertaining, impressionable verses and ultimately lengthier, perceptive, rhythmically expressed, sustaining ideas.

Or, is either of these an example of versification? precedes a dual poetic experience with Richard Brautigan. Suddenly, through the use of the overhead projector, the students view a transparency of page 27 of *Rommel Drives on Deep into Egypt*. They see the title, "1891-1944," and nothing else: just a blank page! Then the students listen to "Jules Verne Zucchini":

> Men are walking on the moon today,
>
> material deleted due to copyright restrictions
>
> *July 20, 1969*[2]

By this time most students are aware that their teacher's thinking is regaining its equilibrium and that she is merely "doing her thing." With their interest sustained, they are ready to listen to the next four poetic patterns from Louis Untermeyer's *Doorways to Poetry*.

Laughter? Yes, when students listen to John Dryden's "Epitaph on His Wife" introduced with the query, *Or, is this a poetic tribute?:*

> Here lies my wife. Here let her lie.
> Now she's at rest. And so am I.

Listening to the somber tones of Mabel Posegate's "Epitaph on a Beautiful Child," though, soon changes their response to one of serenity and quietude:

> Rain falling on this grave falls bitter;
> Thin dust beneath heeds not its patter.
> Death was cruel to one so little–
> Less than a rose, a loosened petal.

"I/Why?"—Eli Siegel's two-syllable poem "On the Questionable Importance of the Individual"—brings to students' countenances the pondering look expected; and then they are encouraged to search their own consciences in understanding the meaning of William Blake's sharp and forceful couplet "To William Hayley":

---

2. "1891-1944" and "Jules Verne Zucchini" are from the book, *Rommel Drives on Deep into Egypt*, by Richard Brautigan. Copyright © 1970 by Richard Brautigan. Reprinted by permission of Seymour Lawrence/Delacorte Press.

Thy friendship oft has made my heart to ache:
Do be my enemy, for friendship's sake.

Included in *Adventures in American Literature* by John Gehlmann and Mary Rives Bowman is another selection to further the concept of poetry: an American Indian song translated by James Powell that reveals both a sense of humor and a love of natural beauty:

The poor little bee
That lives in the tree
The poor little bee
That lives in the tree
Has only one arrow
In his quiver.

Finally, students are prepared to listen to poetry with a humanistic and poignant twist: perhaps Countee Cullen's "Any Human to Another" or his "Incident," a simple but tragic poem; or maybe the cruel yet affectionate poem, "My Papa's Waltz," by Theodore Roethke; or maybe " 'Out, Out—' " by Robert Frost; or perhaps Langston Hughes' "Florida Road Worker," or Robert Francis's "Pitcher."

Although probably not unique, another poetic experience which engages students involves Walt Whitman's "Miracles." First, students define a "miracle." (Invariably, their answers reflect the belief that a supernatural or heavenly intervention serves as a catalyst in resolving impossible tasks or ventures, acting as a positive factor in critical situations.) Next, duplicated sheets showing only the line-by-line pattern, punctuation, and title and author of the poem receive the careful scrutiny of the students, as the teacher suggests that they observe and comment. After students notice that the first and the last lines end with question marks, the teacher encourages students to intelligently guess what they believe the questions are that Whitman poses. Then she reads the *first line* of the poem to the students and asks for their conjectures; next, she reads the *first two lines*, later adding the next two, each time probing for additional prognostications. Then she reads the entire poem to discover what the poet considers a "miracle." Finally she invites students to agree or disagree with Whitman's philosophy.

During the next class session, students browse through *Man in the Poetic Mode 5* and decide what poem or poems they wish to read and discuss with their fellow classmates. Students work alone or with other students, and they may use their own ideas concerning the manner of presentation. After individual consultations, some choose a contemporary song, a work of the fine or practical arts that suggests a rhythmic pattern, or a poem

from a book they own or have borrowed from the school or community library.

Thus by using their auditory and visual senses as introductory modes to poetry, students learn more about the powers of language: word precision, sensory impact, perceptive analysis, humanistic appeal through rhythmic expression—and they are eager for total involvement.

SCHAZAAM!

If your students are into comics, why can't your school get into them too? Not as a substitute for literature, but as an appetizer to the main literary dish. Batman and Robin, those caped crusaders against crime in Gotham City, have a place in the English curriculum beside a brief class or two on pop culture. The study of plot, setting, dialogue; an examination of archetypal figures, characterization, and interpersonal relationships; the analysis of poetic devices such as onomatopoeia, alliteration, puns—all these can easily involve the use of the comic book.

George D. Masters
Fox Lane High School
Bedford, New York

Analyzing the lyrics of certain popular songs and composing original poems may help students see that the elegy is not as unfamiliar a poetic form as they may think. David J. Burt teaches at the Francis Marion College, Florence, South Carolina.

DAVID J. BURT

TEACHING THE ELEGY: A CREATIVE RESPONSE

"Where is the horse? Where is the rider? Where is the giver of treasure? Where is the banquet-place? Where is the revelry in the hall?" If the blank, almost blind stares of my college survey of English literature students were any indication, they had indeed missed the significance of the above elegiac outcry in the Old English poem "The Wanderer." At the next meeting, I confirmed my suspicion with a short quiz: garbled half-phrases from poorly taken notes revealed that perhaps a lament was in order for the passing of my previous lecture on the elegy. So I tried another approach—one which not only emphasized the contemporary relevance of the elegy, but which also elicited a personal and creative response.

Stressing the immediacy of the elegy as a means of modern expression, I played Curtis Mayfield's "Freddie's Dead," a city elegy for a deceased dope pusher, and Don McLean's "American Pie," a work with a nostalgic lament for the passing of the good old days of the Fifties. I discovered that many in the class had "studied" these songs and, in the case of the McLean lyric, could identify the veiled allusions to Buddy Holly, Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan, the Beatles, the Byrds, and the satanic Rolling Stones.

With this background preparation, I then set the ground rules for an out-of-class assignment: each person was to write (either in poetry or in prose) a personal elegy, based on some aspect of his life. In spite of the chorus of groans at that moment, I found that the results fully justified the experiment. Most students did come to grips with the basic concept of the elegy as a type of poetic communication, and most tried their hands at a lyric interpretation of some familiar experience.

Although several of the finished products are worthy of comment, at

least two deserve particular recognition. The first lyric, by Betty Campbell, captures with elegiac poignancy that moment of realization that the fabric of life is in flux:

Seasons

A shower—then a day of sun
And spring leaped and raced
Across my neighbor's yard
And flung itself into the trees.
All at once—it took the town—
Brash! Bold! Gaudy spring!
Why does spring no longer creep
Into old swamps
Where sheltered from the threatening chill
A daisy came—a timid, fragile thing—
And I on brown-stockinged knees
Knelt before it on the cold, damp earth
Afraid to touch it—lest it go
And it was hope!
Promised freedom whispered—
Freedom from my out-grown coat
Freedom from my childish feet
From heavy laced-up shoes.
Turning then, I sigh and know too well
It is not spring
That has forever changed,
It is that child!

In contrast is a poem by Anna Lane:

A, B, C, and D

At last the naked truth is revealed.
No longer do we "cross our hearts"
or tug at straps.
Poor thing—you've seen your better days.

You once had a way of getting
your point across.
You held up well under stress
and strain.
But now you must face
life's ups and downs.

The ability to satirize through a mock-serious lament for pre-liberated days reveals an understanding of the elegiac form.

Steven Hind recommends teaching Homer's Odyssey *in conjunction with a modern work having notable similarities but revealing differences. He teaches at Hutchinson Community Junior College, Hutchinson, Kansas.*

STEVEN HIND

KOWALSKI AND ODYSSEUS: RELEVANCE OF THE EPIC

"Speak to me, Muse, of Kowalski, that sensitive boy who broke through the speed of life, who smashed at 120 mph plus into a wall of bulldozer blades set up by the California Highway Patrol." So might Malcolm Hart have begun his version of the *Odyssey* had he wished to give us an explicit clue to the parallels between Homer's story and his own. The movie *Vanishing Point* is the *Odyssey* in modern dress with a modern viewpoint, and its smashing success among American adolescents suggests not only the strong identification of youth with Kowalski, but also the importance and relevance of the original epic to our understanding of ourselves. In a time when the past seems expected to prove its relevance to the present, students might well accept and understand the *Odyssey* by comparing it to *Vanishing Point*. The comparison suggests where we are in direction and distance from the Hellenic past.

At the risk of detracting from the fun of parallel hunting for those who know both works, let me support my claim that Hart must have had Homer's epic in mind when he wrote the screenplay for *Vanishing Point*. Kowalski has fought a terrible war against police corruption and saved a young girl from the paws of a corrupt fellow officer—certainly as much an act of mercy and honor as Odysseus' part in Helen's release from Troy. Kowalski has spent happy hours on the beach with a flower child as exotic as the island nymph Calypso. The young American in the course of the film journeys across half the American continent—from Colorado to California—an odyssey no less expansive than that of Odysseus. And Kowalski's Dodge Charger takes more abuse and is no less supernatural than the "shawl" Ino gives Odysseus to save him from drowning. Kowalski beats a rude and belligerent Jaguar driver in a race to a bridge, just as

Odysseus beats the Phaeacians at the athletic contests they propose. Kowalski receives supernatural aid from Supersoul, a black disc jockey with ESP, just as Odysseus receives aid from Athene, the goddess of wisdom, and from Tiresias, the ageless prophet of the Land of the Dead. Kowalski encounters a desert hermit who catches snakes for a floating medicine show, which is no less of the occult than the Lotus Eaters or the Sirens Odysseus encounters. A vengeful patrolman, single-minded in his obsession with Kowalski's capture, beats Supersoul with the energetic savagery the Cyclops demonstrates in his persecution of Odysseus' men. A lithe nude as mysterious as Circe rides out of the desert on a motorcycle, and Kowalski resists her charms as steadfastly as Odysseus resists Circe's until he has put her powers in check. The plot parallels are nearly endless and certainly too numerous to be accidental: Hart has clearly written a modern *Odyssey*.

The two works present similar panoramas of imaginative rather than realistic spectacle, for when one compares the respective conceptions of man contained in these works, the similarities end. Kowalski's two-day odyssey is motivated by an impulsive bet made with a Denver drug pusher on Friday night that Kowalski can arrive in San Francisco on Sunday. Kowalski promises to telephone the dealer from San Francisco, and he gulps some speed—he literally eats it, one observes—and shags west down the freeway. From this point the story of our hero unfolds through a series of flashbacks in which we see him repeatedly disillusioned by the callousness and brutality of man. Kowalski is a man in flight, but Supersoul calls him "the last beautiful free soul on this planet." Kowalski burns down the highway and, aided by oblique advice from Supersoul, who monitors police radio frequencies, evades the police of four states. The police control system, with its vast resources of communications systems, police cars, helicopters, and road blocks, inevitably draws a net around Kowalski until he is trapped on a shrinking stretch of asphalt outside a jerkwater town in California. At the city limits, two bulldozers are brought up to form a massive steel V, blocking the road. After racing up and down the road in the closing net for a short time, Kowalski turns into the blades and, with the wild stare of deranged revelation in his eyes, bursts like a comet into oblivion. So ends a modern saga, for epic it is not.

Students must be reminded that epic is at least as much an attitude as a form. This is especially true in translation, since Homer's grand meter can never really be captured in English. Homer's men exude a divinity in their simplest actions: Homer says Telemachus "slung his sharp sword about his shoulder, under his shining feet bound his fair sandals, and came forth from his chamber in bearing like a god." This is Odysseus' son, not

Kowalski; the lofty image is typical of Homer's attitude toward both his heroes. Odysseus bears all burdens with endurance and strength. He sails the treacherous seas to meet and subdue brutishness and sloth; he does not flee from them. He rejects Calypso's sensuality in favor of the mortal struggle, the battle against the stream of time which is man's vivid assurance of his own existence. He refuses to be defeated. He is the force of good and right, and evil cannot prevail against him even when personified by over one hundred of the world's young aristocrats, whom he slays for their "wanton willfullness." Odysseus is the righteous father of his family and his kingdom and through courage and calculation reestablishes the ongoing order of the family, which made civilized life possible.

One does not need to ponder these two men long to perceive the change in man's concept of man from Homer to Hart. Kowalski has lost faith in his ability to impose order upon his world. The suitors who would plunder Odysseus' house have won and are now the established order. While Odysseus predates the concept of civil law and must establish order personally, and while Kowalski supposedly lives in a society marked by an advanced system of civil law, it is Kowalski who is unable to establish order. One sees a clear link between present and past in the image of the lone individual struggling against the world, but the modern protagonist has lost the subtlety, the craft which allowed Odysseus to prevail against the suitors and for which Athene so loved him. The intellectual faculty which creates the subtle analogy of the palm Odysseus employs to allay Nausicaä's fear and the cunning image of the dog-and-fawn clasp he describes to Penelope to foreshadow his destruction of the suitors has no equivalent in Kowalski. Kowalski lacks subtlety, but young audiences seem to accept frustrated idealism as a suitable substitute. The film presents a hero who is unable to establish a just and moral order in the face of corruption. Having given up in despair, the escape Kowalski seeks as a "free soul" seems unattainable on earth, so he tries for a new game next door, also a gamble for this modern man it would seem, for in *Vanishing Point* we journey to no Land of the Dead, unless one sees Kowalski's environment as the land of the living dead.

The machine is Kowalski's raft, and it too plays a large part in his defeat. Rather than being destroyed by angry gods, man's very tools have overwhelmed him and left him impotent. His only remaining act of will is self-destruction bereft of glory. Defeated even in the final, pointless dash, our hero ends with a bang after much recollected whimpering about the difficulty of living. Power rather than human endurance and intelligence is the victor in this saga: Kowalski attempts to speed away from his failures in his powerful machine until the system rears its more power-

ful head. Bulldozers are stiff competition.

Certainly the *Odyssey* reflects the ideals of Achaean Greece. Who can say that a work as attractive as *Vanishing Point* has been to American youth does not reflect the outlook of many young people? Such futility is certainly not an attractive consideration, but only through taking stock of where and who one is can a meaningful shift in direction be possible. The potential metaphorical meanings of Kowalski's end are certainly ominous. Will man become so hopeless, so pessimistic about his failures that he wills a global conflagration? One might suggest an application even to space travel: unless our sense of ourselves allows for the establishment of a reasonable and ordered state here, we are not likely to fare better with our fear at the head of another fiery blast in a rocketship, searching for a new world. One discovers, as the Greeks knew, that internally or externally we cannot escape from ourselves. Odysseus is sure of his strength and controls his fear: " 'Bear up, my heart! A thing more hideous than this you once endured with patience. . . .' " The Greek ideal assumed man had a propensity for courage and justice: he had only to encourage his innate potential. Kowalski cannot cope with the world and destroys himself.

Homer and Hart confirm the notion that the world does not change; danger and corruption abound. Homer suggests that a strong heart is required if man is to endure; Hart seems to suggest a modern feeling that goodness is foiled at every turn, that force and insensitivity finally win. Man's faith in his ability to control danger and corruption seems to be the key variable. Students may be moved to reflect upon their own odysseys.

REPORTING MYTHS

Students can be television or radio announcers reporting news about "Jason and the Golden Fleece" or "The Twelve Labors of Hercules." They can team report the sensational kidnapping of Persephone or the exciting adventures of Theseus. Much investigative and imaginative research can go into their "news reports."

Carmela R. Visco
Augustine J. Belmonte Junior High School
Saugus, Massachusetts

Confronting students with a moral paradox as a means of fostering understanding of opposing points of view in argumentation is suggested here by Leigh H. Holmes, School of Education, University of Kansas.

LEIGH H. HOLMES

LANGUAGE AND THE LOGIC OF DILEMMA: FOSTERING SOME UNDERSTANDINGS

There are ways to improve the kind of situation in which an energetic class discussion is frustrated because of limited conceptions of the purposes of argument. All too often argument is viewed only in competitive terms. Instead of pursuing lines of thought which could illuminate the broader functions of debate, class time is consumed through repetitive lines of reasoning and through a reluctance to leave minor points. Students end up not really hearing or understanding one another.

Guided reflection upon class argumentation, however, can work in a way which develops the students' capacities for sympathizing with differing perspectives. The plan is one in which the elements of a moral paradox are gradually introduced to the class in connection with a scheduled period of debate. The class reads and discusses selections from the writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne and a tale from the oriental *Panchatantra*. (I have chosen these readings because they seem most suitable for an easy recognition of a universally inescapable sort of problem.) The teacher should strive to have the class understand the consequences of an excessive preoccupation with evil in "Ethan Brand," "Young Goodman Brown," and "The Minister's Black Veil." He should point out that each story deals with a loss of freedom and lightness of spirit. References can be made to Goodman Brown becoming a "darkly meditative" man, to the Reverend Hooper being "shrouded in dismal suspicions," and to Ethan Brand finally becoming nothing less than a "fiend." Platitudes such as "hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil" or "always look on the bright

side of things" should help everyone understand the emphasis.

The teacher may juxtapose the "hear no evil" precept, which seems to make good sense when derived from the Hawthorne tales, with that same precept when studied in the fable "How the Crow-Hen Killed the Black-Snake" in the Arthur Ryder translation of the *Panchatantra* (University of Chicago Press). Since this story may be less familiar than Hawthorne's stories, here is the basic plot. A black snake is continually eating the offspring of a tree-dwelling crow couple. The wife pleads with her husband to abandon their home and seek a new place to live, but he wants to stay and defeat the snake. But how? He will take the problem to someone who has mastered works of ethics. The crow meets a jackal, who tells him the following story. An old heron had systematically deceived the fish of a pond by warning a few at a time that they should try to leave the pond because fishermen with nets were coming. Not bothering to question the heron's motives, the fish had been led to believe that the heron would fly them to safety. Instead, he had dropped them on some rocks and then fed upon them. One day the heron tried to deceive a crab in this manner. But the crab was more of a realist than the fish. He thought:

> Fear fearful things while yet
> No fearful thing appears;
> When danger must be met,
> Strike, and forget your fears.

Then the crab caught the heron by the neck and decapitated him, making the pond safe for its inhabitants. The crow, after hearing the story from the jackal, returns home, steals a king's golden chain, and puts it in the hole where the snake lives. Eventually the snake is killed by the king's men searching for the stolen chain.

After reading this tale, students will see the paradox. On the one hand, failure to be aware of evil motives and schemes may bring disaster to a community: people had best be on guard in order to survive. Yet the "realist's" wary anticipation suggests the spiritual downslides depicted in Hawthorne's stories: some kind of fall might accompany the pragmatic enlightenment which comes through awareness of evil. Students can prepare to discuss or debate the problem. Do they agree with the "hear no evil" position? Or with the "realistic" outlook? Students can buttress their views and arguments with examples from other works of literature as well as from their own experiences.

Students will find meaningful and significant those observations and conclusions which are formulated through a process of self-reflection and

are focused upon actual class developments. Students might specifically be asked about changes in their own points of view during the class discussion or debate. They might consider why the views of so many people tend to become fixed. Did they find themselves *personally* involved in either the "hear no evil" or "fear fearful things" position? What background influences, both personal and general, might have caused this personal involvement?

Most English teachers no doubt want to increase students' potential for understanding the views of others by improving the students' capabilities in the use of language. What situation is better suited than class debate for dramatizing the need for understanding? Often during debate, an unwritten code is established whereby very narrow verbal behavior sets in. This behavior can become the object of a rewarding examination if the teacher purposely demonstrates to students their capacity for increased understanding. This can be realized by getting students to think about their changes in attitude and by showing them that effective expression involves the ability to articulate difficult ideas, not merely the power to win an argument.

High school students both need to know and are mature enough to handle literature which portrays the brutal and shocking realities of modern life. Joan Griffin, a teacher at Brookings High School, South Dakota, reflects on a case of attempted censorship.

JOAN GRIFFIN

THE UNSMILING ASPECTS OF LITERATURE AND LIFE

The power of the printed word may have been eclipsed by other media, as some suggest, but the inclusion of Claude Brown's autobiography, *Manchild in the Promised Land*, in an eleventh grade black literature unit elicited the lively wrath of at least one parent and provided conclusive proof that the printed word still contains enough power to stir people considerably.

The particulars of this would-be censorship case will sound familiar to teachers of literature who have had similar experiences—perhaps with *Catcher in the Rye*, *Soul on Ice*, Shakespeare, or even the Bible. When phone calls to both the high school principal and the district superintendent did not result in the withdrawal of *Manchild* from the school system, the complainant took his grievance to the school board. At a public board of education meeting, the protestor requested that the board ban the use of *Manchild* because of its "foul language and immoral acts." After reading aloud certain selected passages from the book and arguing that "children should not be exposed to this sort of thing," the parent rested his case with the words, "I'm against using our money for this type of book. There are others we could use."

Fortunately, one board member (a professor in the English department at the local state university) had read the book and came to the defense not only of academic freedom but of *Manchild* as worthwhile literature. The school board's final decision was one which preserved both my right to teach *Manchild* and the student's right to read it, and the issue died. At this writing, there have been no further repercussions (except that local bookstores have sold out every available copy).

Manchild is Claude Brown's autobiography of growing up during the

late 1940s and 50s in Harlem, the "promised land" for those Southern sharecroppers who came to New York during the decade following the depression. In the foreword, Brown tells us that for these Southern blacks, New York was "goodbye to the cotton fields, goodbye to 'Massa Charlie,' goodbye to the chain gangs, and most of all, goodbye to those sunup-to-sundown working hours." But what awaited them in New York was the reality of the ghetto that makes the title of the book so ironic. The migrating blacks exchanged the backbreaking life in the cotton fields for a totally degraded existence in the crowded slums of the industrial city, and they fast became a "misplaced generation, a misplaced people in an extremely complex, confused society." Claude Brown inherited the total lot of his disillusioned, *pioneering* parents—"the disappointments, the anger, the misery, the little hope of deliverance." The answer to the question, "Where does one run to when he's already in the promised land?" is "nowhere"—except to the streets where gang fighting, stealing, prostitution, pimping, dope pushing, and killing tend to be the norm.

Brown describes his "childhood," and how he learned very early that "you had to fight and you should fight"; in fact, fighting and stealing were the main ways of making him feel like a "somebody." By 1957, Brown was an adolescent, drugs had replaced the knife, and a new revolution was in progress on the streets of Harlem: "Heroin had just about taken over. . . . Drugs were killing just about everybody off in one way or another. . . . It was like a plague . . . a ghost haunting the community."

After reading and rereading *Manchild*, I am unable to find any evidence that Claude Brown has exploited the sensational or more unsavory aspects of his experiences or that he has written anything that could be considered a book subversive of morality. Far from making vice and the drug culture attractive, his rejection of them is the point of the book. That Brown, now a law student, could ever escape and write such a book is remarkable in itself, for the tragedy of *Manchild* is that so few do survive. Brown's book is a message of hope to the ghetto as well as a revelation to those more fortunate. In his concluding chapter, he fantasizes that he is driving up and down the streets of Harlem in a truck equipped with a loudspeaker telling "the younger cats out there on the streets nodding and scratching" that there is a way out. Despair, pessimism, acquiescence in suffering, and degradation is not his message: "I'd like to show [the residents of Harlem] that despite everything that Harlem did to our generation, I think it gave something to a few. It gave them a strength that couldn't be obtained anywhere else."

To those of us who grew up in WASP-town, U.S.A., the realities of Harlem street life undoubtedly appear brutal, at times incredible, cer-

tainly shocking. The question then becomes, Do high school juniors need to know about such things and, if so, are they mature enough to handle such books? In a letter to the editor of the *Brookings* [S. D.] *Register* (February 20, 1973) one student questioned adults about the supposed naivete of others his age: "I recall what all of us have been exposed to on television: murder, robbery, kidnapping, extortion, hate, violence, greed, and sick jokes, to name a few." Pointing out that "this audio-visual attack on the brain" has exposed his generation to the "undesirable side of society" long before the age of sixteen or seventeen, he argued that *Manchild* and "what it says about the black man's problems in the ghetto is about the best insight we in South Dakota can obtain. . . ." In an editorial in the school newspaper another student wrote: "It is a shame to keep people sheltered from a book with such a straightforward, honest approach to dealing with day-to-day life in Harlem, or any other ghetto. Maybe that's part of our racial problem today."

If some realities of life are painful, we must not turn our backs on them, for then we do injustice to our students and ourselves; if we are shocked, I hope it is less by realistic language and more by suffering and degradation such as that depicted in *Manchild*.

Ways to involve high school students in the critical evaluation of news reportage in the popular media are suggested by Jack R. Cameron, Faculty of Education, University of Calgary, Alberta.

JACK R. CAMERON

READING MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS CRITICALLY

An increasingly important yet still largely neglected task of the schools is to train students from an early age to meet the intellectual and emotional demands of the mass-media. If people are to develop and defend an open society, they must be capable of assessing their sources of information. Among the most important of these are the mass-circulation magazines and the daily newspaper, which (whether we like it or not) will be the chief reading material of the majority of our students in adult life. How can the English teacher improve the ability of students to comprehend and critically analyze the popular printed media?

Using current newspapers and magazines gathered from home and school sources, the teacher should first undertake a survey with the class of the kinds of news items that appear in the popular press. These may generally be classified in two major categories: *transient or short-term situations* that flare up briefly and then quickly disappear (examples include a specific case of industrial relations problems between labor and management, with threatened or actual strike action; a local or national political campaign; a social, financial, or curricular crisis in the local school system; a proposed vote on fluoridation of the water supply) and *continuing or long-term situations* that revolve around more basic issues in the society (examples include women's liberation; pollution; automobile safety standards; space exploration; sky-jacking; censorship and pornography).

Following this preliminary survey, the teacher might propose that the class, in groups of two or three, undertake the role of "press watchers" for the year, analyzing how certain segments of the printed media handle both transient and continuing stories.

Besides a pile of manila filing folders, the minimum in raw materials would include two local newspapers (hopefully of different political convictions) plus some magazines such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, etc. and perhaps the weekend edition of the *New York Times*. Add to these any other sources of lively writing on current events. The titles will vary with the age and ability of the class. Since most of these publications would eventually be cut up, they might have to be supplied mainly from home subscriptions after parents have finished with them.

Each group would elect to serve as watchdog on a particular story. They would clip all references to it from the resources available. These would be attached singly or in clusters to a sheet of durable paper, dated, and placed in the file. A typical short-term news story would break on the front page of the newspaper and would be adopted by a group that had no current assignment, or perhaps by a group also in charge of a long-term issue. Besides follow-up news stories on subsequent days, the group would also be alert for editorial comment, the opinions of the columnists, cartoons, letters to the editor, and the comparatively delayed reactions of the weekly news magazines.

The files would become a part of the holdings of the classroom or central library. From time to time the students, singly or in groups, would be sent to a specific file and asked to do a careful analysis of all materials as an English, social studies, or "reading" assignment. They would return with written and/or oral reports to the class on the basic issues involved, editorial and public reaction, final outcome, etc. How objective was the original reporting? Were the headlines ever loaded? How much emotional vocabulary was used? How sound was the logic of the various commentaries?

Occasionally certain files become obsolete and should be withdrawn in order to keep the holdings as fresh and provocative as possible.

Note what such a project entails: the students are learning how to work independently in groups; they are producing their own curriculum materials; they are doing a good deal of critical reading and reporting, and they are learning something about logical thinking. But most important, by engaging in actual field work, they are gaining insights into how the mass-media handle the news and should be more intelligent readers as a result.

FOR THE ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL TEACHER

Norine Odland admonishes teachers to avoid using depersonalizing, value-laden labels for children. She is a member of the faculty of the Division of Elementary Education, University of Minnesota.

NORINE ODLAND

THE LANGUAGE OF LABELS

The young woman had no smile on her face when she came to ask for help in finding a book for a TITLE II SECOND LEVEL READER. When I asked how old the child was and what the child liked to read, she didn't know. She did know he was in a LOW ACHIEVING SCHOOL.

Labels used by teachers and other school personnel, 1973, refer to:

—books to use with TRANSITION ROOM CHILDREN

—books to read to S.L.B.P. KIDS[1]

—ways to stop fights between PAIRED SCHOOL CHILDREN who are expressing hostilities on the playground

—HOT LUNCH CHILDREN who get to stop work five minutes earlier than COLD LUNCH CHILDREN

—RECEIVING SCHOOL CHILDREN who need help accepting BUSED CHILDREN.

Labels are used as a direct and planned part of some instructional procedures. In one classroom children are directed to find their STATION for individualized instruction. One group is working with word games in the station labeled THINKERS. The irony of the label strikes as one child works with pairs of words and puts *uninvited* and *uninvite* in the column headed CHANGED BY ADDING D TO MAKE PAST TENSE. Thinkers? The label fits neither teacher nor students.

What are we doing to children when we use labels?

Labels are shortcuts in communication, but are they shortcuts a teacher can afford to take? The person, the child, comes last in most of the labels, and in that position the worth of the person is diminished. Labels dehumanize by placing the emphasis on the skill, the place, or the condi-

1. Special Learning and Behavior Problems

tion. Self-respect is hard to attain when a label tells you what is expected.

Most labels dehumanize, and some labels have potentials for instilling hypocrisy and phoniness. The Thinkers probably know that they are not thinking much, or if they believe they are, the meaning of the word is lost. The HIGH-JUMPERS, the SWALLOWS, and the CHAMPIONS are labels for values which often do damage through anxiety and distortion.

Beverly Cleary, in an article "Low Man in the Reading Circle; or, A Blackbird Takes Wing,"[2] describes the despair she felt when she was a BLACKBIRD in a first grade reading class, where other children were REDBIRDS and BLUEBIRDS. In second grade, when the teacher was kind and gentle and children were not made anxious by bird labels, this Blackbird, although not exactly taking wing, at least got off the ground.

If the labels used by a classroom teacher are an expression of a philosophy of education which supports labeling, there is little chance for change. There is a chance for change by those teachers who have casually acquired the occupational jargon but for whom it really does not express a philosophy of education. A teacher can keep a record of the labels used in the classroom. Talk from the teachers' lounge and staff meetings will contribute to the count. If a teacher decides that limiting the labels might be a way toward better teaching, there is one sure way to change: stop using the language of labels.

2. Beverly Cleary, "Low Man in the Reading Circle; or, A Blackbird Takes Wing," *Horn Book* 45 (June 1969): 287-93.

POETIC TALK

Watch children at play in a natural setting and listen to the way they use language. They use it with spontaneity, and frequently the result is close to poetry. Why is it that we make such poor use of that fact once they begin school? We frequently try to teach them reading from texts that are far less sophisticated in their use of language than their own language. I don't think there is a child who has learned to speak who doesn't sometimes make up poetry as he talks.

Avis C. Swart
State University of New York
Plattsburgh

A way of weaving together language arts activities into a meaningful whole is presented by Patricia A. Payne and Rebecca Shandling, Department of Elementary Education, University of Alberta.

PATRICIA A. PAYNE
REBECCA SHANDLING

PLANNING AN INTEGRATED LANGUAGE ARTS UNIT

This article is based on the assumptions that the integration of the language arts is essential in the elementary school and that language and reading are not subjects to be taught at a specified time each day, but tools to be used and developed throughout the school day.

Teachers, therefore, need to identify the skills that children need to express and receive ideas so that these skills may be taught at times appropriate to the needs and interests of the children. Where can teachers begin their planning for the integration of the language arts? An approach we have found useful is outlined below.*

First the teacher selects a topic or theme that is appropriate for the age group involved, e.g., "Me, Myself, and I" for a group of first grade children. Her frame of reference is that she will develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills through this topic. The specific skills she develops will be those that the children in her group need to work on; the materials she chooses should lend themselves, too, to the development of those skills.

Brainstorming, the teacher might list experiences for the children that involve:

1. listening to and discussing poems related to the theme;
2. looking at and discussing photographs of themselves as babies and as older children;
3. printing and recognizing words related to the theme;
4. identifying sounds at the beginnings and ends of these words;
5. associating these sounds with their printed symbols;
6. writing stories composed by the class;

*This approach is based in part on the ideas of Patricia A. McFetridge, Department of Elementary Education, University of Alberta.

Theme: Me, Myself, and I

Reception	Skills and Process	Expression
Listening to poems, stories related to me.	Recalling details, sequence of events; predicting outcomes.	Discussion of photographs of me as a baby.
Looking at photographs of "me."	Observing, labeling, describing, comparing.	Oral discussion of two photos.
Identifying sounds at beginnings of words related to theme.	Auditory discrimination. Visual discrimination and memory.	Printing and identifying words related to "me."
Identifying sound/symbol relationships.	Auditory-visual association.	Writing stories related by class.
Reading stories composed by the class.	Visual memory for word forms (reading vocab, sight vocab).	Writing about my likes and dislikes (activities, foods).
Reading printed labels of foods.	Development of vocabulary (breadth, precision).	Naming and describing the foods (taste, touch).
Smell, tasting, feeling foods.	Imagining.	Draw a picture and tell a story about "the other me."

7. reading stories composed by the class;

8. reading stories and poems written by others, related to the theme.

This is an essential first step, but not enough. The teacher next needs to go beyond this listing of activities and consciously plan for the development of needed skills through these activities. The chart represents the possible direction of the teacher's thinking about the skills she will develop. From it the teacher can plan a sequence of instruction. If she is guided by the general principle that good listening and speaking skills should precede the development of reading and writing skills, sequencing will be facilitated. Using the chart, the teacher will proceed from listening for and discussing details and sequences of events in poems, to observing details in photographs, orally labeling them and describing and comparing them, to drawing pictures of and writing sentences about observations, to learning to recognize the words in print, and so on. Thus the children move sequentially through speaking, listening, writing, and reading experiences about a topic they enjoy.

Ways of listening to and improving the capabilities of children's oral language are described by Robert Jackson of the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta.

ROBERT JACKSON

THE DESCRIPTIVE POWER OF CHILDREN'S ORAL LANGUAGE

One of the strong and consistent themes running through the newer language arts programs at the elementary level is the emphasis on the development of the child's oral language. Recognizing that the sound development of oracy is not only a worthy goal in itself but that it also builds a firm basis for the later development of literacy, most recent language arts programs encourage teachers to foster oral development. Most teachers at the elementary level are entirely in sympathy with this new emphasis on oral communication.

However, while most teachers sincerely wish to improve the oral communication abilities of their students, many have expressed a feeling of uneasiness in approaching the task. A number of teachers have asked the present writer questions such as "Well, what do I teach in oral communication?" or "What do I look for in a child's oral language in order to decide what he needs to know next?" Questions such as the above are particularly vexing since comprehensive answers do not appear to exist. To the best of this writer's knowledge, no one has yet produced a satisfactory scope-and-sequence chart for oral communication—and probably no one ever will because of the complexity of the task.

The classroom teacher, however, requires some rough-and-ready benchmarks to use in examining the oral language of his students and in setting up reasonable instructional goals for his class. The following brief article provides samples of children's oral language production and a brief analysis of the language with an attempt to provide some insights that may be valuable to the classroom teacher in planning his oral communication program.

The examples included were obtained in response to a description task. A somewhat open-ended request was given to the child to "tell me about" a number of real objects. Familiar objects were used in the hope that the children would have had some experiences with these objects. The interviewer attempted to encourage the children to talk without actually taking part in a dialogue. The children's responses were tape-recorded for later analysis. The children interviewed came from grades one to six in the public schools of Edmonton, Alberta. The samples included are part of a larger project involving not only description but also narration, explanation and definition.

The objects used for the description tasks were, for the most part, household articles. The children were free to explore them in any way they saw fit. The children in grades one and two were asked to describe a letter-size envelope, a plastic wash pail, and a revolving lawn sprinkler. The lawn sprinkler was considerably more difficult to describe than either of the other two objects since it possessed a variety of shapes and colors and a rather complex method of use. The older children were asked to describe the same envelope, a 25-watt household light bulb, and a large sea shell. The shell provided some interesting problems in description, again due to a variety of shapes, colors, and textures.

Below are some illustrative samples of the protocols obtained at selected grade levels. The samples are illustrative of the changes that take place over the elementary school years; however, no claim is made that these samples are "normal" for a particular grade level.

Grade One Child

INTERVIEWER: O.K. This is the first thing I want you to tell me about. Tell me everything you can about this [wash pail].

CHILD: This is round and it's made out of sort of rubber, and um . . . in it you can put water and dirt and stuff like that.

INTERVIEWER: O.K.

CHILD: And um . . . it's . . . the color is white, and um . . . it's a round shape and it has a handle on it, and um . . . it's dirty, sort of, and . . . it's round on the bottom. There's two little squa.es on the side.

INTERVIEWER: O.K., good. That's fine. All right, now tell me everything you can about that [envelope].

CHILD: O.K. This is an envelope and you can put um . . . letters into it that you um . . . that you printed, and you can send it to a friend that you know and . . . you can write on it, and it's square and um . . . and um . . . and um . . . you can put a stamp on it, and um . . . you can lick this part here, and um . . . it's white.

INTERVIEWER: Good. Thank you. All right, tell me everything you can about that [sprinkler].

CHILD: Well, you put a hose through here, and then when you start it, water comes out of it, and it can turn, and um . . . and um . . . it can turn around, and then you can . . . um um . . . and then you can shut it off, and it's a red color and gold, and it has printing on it, and um . . . this has this thing on the side here—a tap, and um . . . it's gold inside.

Grade Two Child

INTERVIEWER: This is the first thing I would like you to tell me about. Tell me all about this [wash pail].

CHILD: Well, it's a pail, and you put water in it to clean, and you can feed animals with it, and you can um . . . fetch water with it, and right here it's white inside and outside, and . . . it's plastic, and it's um . . . it has a piece of metal on its handle. It has a white thing that goes around it, to put your hand on, and, well . . . on the bottom it has two circles, and um . . . inside it has two circles and a dot in the middle, and um . . . round the edges it goes up and down . . . um . . . in the bottom it has sort of a . . . a little looks like a mushroom, and it has a hole there to put the metal through—it sort of has a box . . . it's round in the bottom . . . it's bigger, it has a bigger circle on the top and on the other side the same thing, and um. . . .

INTERVIEWER: Good. Now I want you to tell me everything you can about that [envelope].

CHILD: It's an envelope and it's white and it has all different kinds of folds in it and you lick it. There's rounded parts and pointed parts and there's a triangle, and . . . and the whole . . . it has a square, and . . . and it has sort of square edges around there, and . . . and um . . . where the part you lick it is yellow—light, light yellow—and you put a letter in it you send to people, and up in the corner you put a stamp, and you write who you want to give it to, and you write their address, and . . . and it goes in the mail box, and . . . and that's all.

INTERVIEWER: Good. O.K. Now, the last thing I want you to tell me about is this thing [lawn sprinkler].

CHILD: Well, it's a sprinkler, and you use it in the summer time to water your grass and water your flowers and water your trees, and . . . it spins around at the top, and you put a hose through there . . . and it's red and silver, and at the bottom it's sort of shaped like a time clock, and it . . . it has words in here. It says it gets the corners, and

. . . and it's sort of, it's rough there and smooth there, and . . . it's sort of middle in there. It has a little nut there, and round, it has little holes, and . . . and there's some white there, and it's um . . . and it . . . um . . . when you put the hose in here water comes out the little holes, and this thing spins around and gets all over your yard in the summertime, and . . . then the little hole, it's silver and sort of grey in there . . . and the bottom, there's a square thing in there . . . um . . . that's all.

Grade Five Child

INTERVIEWER: This is the first thing that I would like you to tell me about [envelope].

CHILD: Well . . . this is an envelope and it's usually used for mailing letters, and . . . um . . . you put the letter inside here, and you put the stamp on the right hand corner, put the address in the middle, and . . . um . . . well, you mail it.

INTERVIEWER: O.K., very good. All right, now tell me about that [light bulb].

CHILD: This is a light bulb and it's used for lighting up houses. You put it inside a lamp. It's a 25-watt bulb. Thomas Edison invented them, and . . . um . . . that's all.

INTERVIEWER: Good. O.K. Tell me everything you can about this [sea shell].

CHILD: This is a sea shell, and an animal lives inside here, and to get it out you have to pull it out with a shoestring or something like this, and . . . um . . . from my experience in Australia, the only place I've ever seen it found—one as big as this—is in Great Bering Reef . . . um . . . it's pink in here and . . . um . . . it's got sort of sea tarnish in here, right around here.

Grade Six Child

INTERVIEWER: All right. This is the first thing I would like you to tell me about [envelope].

CHILD: This is an envelope and it's white. It's made out of paper. It's rectangular shape and you can put letters and business letters in it and send it anywhere. Before you send it to um . . . say Australia, you have to have a stamp, um . . . that's all.

INTERVIEWER: O.K. Very good. All right, tell me everything you can about this [light bulb].

CHILD: This is a light bulb. Twenty-five watt and sort of gloomy . . . um . . . it's glass and it's very breakable . . . um . . . you can buy them

almost anywhere.

INTERVIEWER: Very good. All right, you tell me everything you can about that [sea shell].

CHILD: This is a very huge shell and it's very rough and in some places it is quite soft, like on the inside. Pink, a bit of brown, white, grey, um . . . mauve, white—no I said that . . . um . . . the outside's got black and it's in layers.

In examining the children's oral language, no attempt will be made to comprehensively analyze every possible aspect of the utterances. Instead, emphasis will be given to what Loban[1] has termed *coherence*, which refers to the clarity and precision of communication. In addition, emphasis will be given to examining aspects of the communication which may provide useful information for classroom teachers.

One feature which seems evident in examining the children's oral language production is that the younger children, and in this case, particularly the grade two child, appear to delight in providing the interviewer with a deluge of minute detail. The grade one child refers to the "two little squares" etched into the side of the pail, while the grade two child refers to the "two circles with a dot in the middle" embossed on the bottom of the pail. For the younger children, an oral description includes copious reference to very specific and often inconsequential details.

The older children, while still including some reference to minute detail, seem to prefer to make more general statements about the objects. Rather than describing a variety of angles and shapes, as the grade two child did, the grade six child simply states that the envelope is a "rectangular shape."

Thus younger children tend to provide a considerable number of statements referring to minor details, while older children tend to provide more general statements which summarize their descriptions. The classroom teacher may wish to encourage his students to derive appropriate general or summary statements in their oral communication, remembering always that minute detail has a place in description and no attempt should be made to eliminate it.

An examination of the copious detail provided by the younger children indicates that much of the detail refers to characteristics of the objects which are primarily available to the senses. The younger children tend to list colors, such as the grade one child did in describing the sprinkler ("it's a red color and gold"). Similarly, they tend to list shapes such as the

1. W. D. Loban, "Problems in Oral English," NCTE Research Report no. 5 (Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1966).

grade two child did in describing the envelope ("There's rounded parts and pointed parts and there's a triangle"). Thus younger children tend to lay heavy emphasis on perceptual detail. This may have been influenced in part by the nature of the task.

Older children, however, when faced with the same task, provide not only statements of perceptual detail but also statements which refer to their knowledge of and experience with the objects. Thus the grade five child indicates that from her experience shells of this size may be found in a particular location. The grade six child indicates that the 25-watt light bulb is "sort of gloomy" and "breakable," attributes which can only be derived from past experiences. So older children tend to interpret objects in light of their previous experience in addition to reporting what is available to their senses.

While older children tend to provide more interpretative statements than younger children, at no time does attention to perceptual detail drop away entirely. The balance appears to shift over the elementary years. The classroom teacher may wish to encourage this shift in balance by fostering statements of interpretation while maintaining statements of perceptual details.

The careful reader will already have noticed that in describing the oral language of the younger children, the word *listing* has been used. The younger students appear to produce most of their ideas in the form of a list, with little explicit relationship existing between ideas except that similar ideas are often clustered together. The grade one child lists three distinct ideas about the pail—it is round, made of rubber, and one can put water, dirt, or other stuff in it. The grade two child groups together a list of three uses for the sprinkler—it can be used for watering grass, flowers, or trees.

The older children appear to be developing a degree of rhetorical control which allows them to relate ideas together in a more complex form than simple listings. The grade six child uses an illustration in describing the sending of a letter—it could be sent to Australia.

While it should be remembered that much oral communication is not highly organized due to its extemporaneous nature, the classroom teacher can nonetheless encourage his students to relate ideas together through the use of examples, superordinate ideas, and other devices in order to improve the total organization of what is said.

One feature of the children's responses is of interest because it does not appear to change greatly over the elementary years. The grade one child refers to the plastic wash pail as "sort of rubber," while the grade two child indicates that the rectangular envelope has "sort of square

edges." The grade five child indicates that the sea shell has "sort of sea tarnish," and the grade six child refers to the light bulb as "sort of gloomy." The children seem to feel the need to qualify parts of their descriptions by the use of small phrases like "sort of" or endings such as "ish." If Burns[2] is correct, this type of behavior may indicate that the children all possess ideas for which they do not as yet have the appropriate words. (The child knows that the pail is like but is not rubber, but doesn't know exactly what label to give to his burgeoning idea.) If this is so, it would appear that the children all need and are searching for more precise words to express their thoughts. It would seem that the classroom teacher may be able to use these opportunities to profitably introduce new words as the children strive for precision in descriptive language.

The above analysis of the oral language of children faced with a descriptive task has merely scratched the surface. It is hoped, however, that classroom teachers will find the suggestions of some value in improving their students' oral language capabilities.

2. D. C. Burns, "A Note on the Responses Made by Secondary School Children in Their Definitions of Words," *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 30 (1960): 30-39.

FINGER PLAYS

Story time provides an excellent opportunity for children to respond creatively. After a story is told, let the children dramatize what the story meant to them. For example, one teacher, after reading the story of Henny Penny, let the children take the parts of the characters in the story. This story has much repetition, and the children were soon able to repeat the names of the various fowl which had been mentioned. They also knew what each character would say as the story progressed and so helped the teacher with the reading of the story, responding in unison. This gave confidence to the timid child who might not respond in an individual situation.

After listening to and helping tell the story, the children were encouraged to dramatize the story. As they acted out the various parts through finger plays they responded in their own way, and those who were too timid or who couldn't remember their parts were helped by the teacher to act out the parts they did recall.

Margaret Breitenbach
North Queen Anne School
Seattle, Washington

Stella Happel reminisces about language arts activities in the one-room school where she taught in Winona County, Minnesota. She now teaches reading in Houston, Minnesota.

STELLA E. HAPPEL

LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES IN THE ONE-ROOM SCHOOL

There were fifteen children in attendance at the district school, with one teacher for eight grades. On this morning, the teacher stood before the entire school conducting a language lesson.

She asked, "What is a ballad?" She wrote the question on the blackboard.

Hands raised. A little girl in the first grade suggested it might have something to do with balls. She had seen the word *ball* in the word *ballad*. A boy in the eighth grade said he thought he had read somewhere that it was a song.

To find out, each of the older pupils chose a smaller child to be his helper, and together in groups the youngsters looked through books, encyclopedias, dictionaries. The teacher became just as involved in their "finds"; and as interest heightened, the teacher read some ballads: "Maid Marion," from the ballads about Robin Hood, and "Casey Jones" (the older boys leaned forward in their seats).

Then she opened the lid of a record player, and soon the strains of "The Old Chisholm Trail" filled the schoolroom.

The youngsters reached for their books, looked up the song, and watched the words, some humming, some saying the words with the record. When the music stopped, voices asked to sing along with the record. So lusty voices sang with the professional singers.

There was a hushed silence when the song ended, and the children closed their books. The teacher waited for what she knew would come next. "Couldn't we make up a ballad?" asked a large, eighth grade boy. His classmates joined in support.

Names of people to write about were jotted down on the blackboard.

Roy, a small boy in fourth grade, suggested Daniel Boone. When the vote was taken, Boone won, 12 to 3.

For some days afterwards, part of each morning was spent on exploring Daniel Boone. Ideas were expressed about lyrics and illustrations for the ballad. One student suggested making "Boonesboro" from fat tree twigs, peeled and halved, using construction paper, with toy men set about strategically. The tune was composed for the lyrics, recorded on staff paper, and sung by students to guitar accompaniment. (The uncle of a third grade girl recorded the finished ballad.) The one-room school had been transformed into Boonesboro.

Finally, a fifth grade girl suggested that parents be invited. Invitations were made, and the performance was held on Mother's Day.

In reflection, was the amount of time and effort spent on ballads and Daniel Boone of sufficient value educationally? The children learned about literature; they learned history through tracing the movement of the ballad from country to country. They expressed their thoughts and so practiced language development. They also practiced spelling, writing, art, music—even arithmetic in the construction of Boonesboro.

Were the youngsters involved? Did they read? Communicate? Did they become aware of themselves as they learned the roles of each other and the teacher in the learning scheme? You bet they did! That's why it is good to see the learning thrills found in one-room schools being recaptured in open-classroom, non-graded schools today.

SILENT FILMS

Silent language and nonverbal communication can be viewed in silent movies. Films such as those of Charlie Chaplin or W. C. Fields are light enough to be easily understood by young children as well as adults. By showing these movies, students can more fully understand what messages our actions convey. An interesting exercise in this regard is to have youngsters write their own scripts for a silent movie. The class can be broken up into several different committees, with each given an opportunity to perform their different interpretations.

Ellen Attias
Yonkers
New York

Drama in the classroom provides children with integrative activities for learning language skills, knowledge, and attitudes and for understanding their interaction with one another. Prentiss Hosford is an associate professor in the Department of Language Education, University of Georgia.

PRENTISS M. HOSFORD

MAGIC OF DRAMA

The second graders were curious about magic. A story in one of the readers dealt with magic, and they wanted to "put on a play" about that story. They were also studying their community—learning what it takes to keep it going, learning about its business and industry, its utilities, people, and resources. Visits outside the school had made them more aware of the social forces around them. Interviews had placed them face to face with adult workers; letters were written and received; charts and displays burst out of the interest center into the corridor. And now: "May we write a play about our town?"

Magic and community. May we have a play? May we write a play? Teachers are committed to language expression, to role playing, and to the transfer of concepts from children's minds to symbols on paper. But . . . would she dare? She would!

The pupils became the citizens of a town—men and women who had particular talents, training, and responsibilities. There were the expected roles of policemen, sheriff, mayor, fireman, doctor, nurse, teacher; and also others, such as pet shop and candy store owners, lawyer, automobile mechanic, chemist, newspaper editor, and airport manager. The pupils created their dialogue spontaneously, with the teacher giving moderate direction from a dual role of reporter and radio announcer. Together they built a complex and interdependent community, patterned somewhat on the one in which they lived. Then something happened.

News came over the radio that several children, who were noticed when they stopped to buy candy on their way home from school, had green faces! They did not appear to be ill, however. An alert, asking all citizens to watch for this phenomenon, quickly revealed that other children had green faces! Definitely—no mistake about it!

This condition had to be described, so it was necessary for observers to be very objective and precise. The cause would be more difficult to discover than the condition was to describe. This problem had to be solved, and neither the effect of the strange malady nor any possibilities for treatment were known.

The pupils had wanted magic, but they hadn't expected to deal with anything as serious and mysterious as this. They formed hypotheses which they would test. The first day's drama ended at a town meeting where, all together, they voiced their observations, beliefs, feelings, fears, and determination to find out what was happening. Their children (imaginary) were placed together for observation, and the few who were not affected were kept inside their homes. The citizens were geared to solving their problem.

As she considered the thought processes, the imagination, and the language output, the teacher was excited. What a challenge to the pupils and to herself as well! This drama could go on for two or three days. She wondered: What *did* cause the children's faces to be green? One person, the airport manager, proposed that someone from Mars had come and cast a spell to make the children go with him. A stranger *had* been seen lurking around the airport and later in the park. Another suggested that the children found a box of eye makeup or greasepaint and had put it on and then been afraid to tell they used it. This idea was quickly put aside by the doctor, though. He had examined them carefully and found that the green was not on the outside of the skin but seemed to be "showing through." So what would happen next? The teacher would have to move the action if it faltered. And what universal was their drama making explicit? In what brotherhood were they united?

Drama is a lively art which develops and refines many skills. This mode of drama—this making of a play—is not preplanned and written down. It grows from the children—out of their experiences and their imagination. It is expressed in their language, through their words and their actions. Through this spontaneous improvisation comes modification of behavior—to fit into a situation, to extend one's self, to share thought or feeling, to create an idea. Children become responsible for the language which issues from deep inside their beings.

Drama appears to be the language arts activity in which the greatest growth can occur. The importance of play in the attainment of a well-integrated personality has been stressed by psychologists and psychiatrists (Axline, 1969; Ekstein, 1966; Ginott, 1961; Kessler, 1966; Winnicott, 1971). Role playing in personal and social learning at school is recommended (Lederman, 1969; Raths et al., 1966; Shaftel and Shaftel, 1967),

and scholars have suggested that children may learn more effectively if they study a discipline by involvement—learn biology by being biologists, or history by being historians (Bruner, 1960).

Elementary school children seem to be attuned to this style of learning and, given subtle but purposive direction by the teacher, they quickly become proficient and creative in situations new to them. They learn to face problems by confrontation: What happens when the children of a community seem to be affected by a magic spell? If our astronauts land on the moon and find Russian cosmonauts there too, what takes place? How can a group prevent the building of a shopping center at a crucial point on the Chattahoochee River? In a tornado alert, how do people behave? When an American delegation visits a foreign nation, how are they received in the host country, and how do they feel?

Drama may require and allow for time out for research—to gain information that will influence the developing theme or story. Drama may allow time out for experimenting, for drawing and painting, or for writing about feelings that ask to be expressed and ideas that can be later revisited and shared. Drama may stimulate the composing of music or the coordination of music with action or a background for action. Drama may stimulate sensitivity to things seen or heard that are associated with a given time, place, or attitude. The possibilities are as vast as the children's and teacher's capacities to reach.

Through drama a teacher develops her teaching skills: When should I withhold expertise—or give information, and how much? How can I direct the leadership—strengthen the group's cohesiveness? Does the action require acceleration, or slowing down? What means can I use to extend the pupils' vocabulary, or to cause an awareness and assuming of responsibility? How can I express respect and dignity to the pupils—strengthen their self-concepts?

Dorothy Heathcote defines drama as ". . . human beings confronted by situations which change them because of what they must face in dealing with those challenges." In the elementary classroom change and growth can occur. Pupils learn knowledge, attitudes, and skills simultaneously as they play out living situations of the past, present, and future. In a simulated microcosm of society they discover what is implicit in the challenge they face and come to understand their interaction with each other and the interdependence of their roles.

And what caused the green faces? In the park, by the statue of the leprechaun, grew the most marvelous garden of shamrocks. As the children picked the fine four-leafed specimens for luck, a green color appeared and shone through the skin of their faces. It stayed that way for

three days and three nights, and then went away. The cause was discovered on the second night when a nurse found that every child had with him or her a beautiful, large, four-leaf clover. And good luck they brought, too, for the town council decided to plant grass (and shamrocks) on another play lot!

References

Axline, V. *Play Therapy*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1969.
Bruner, J. S. *The Process of Education*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960.
Ekstein, R. *Children of Time and Space, of Action and Impulse*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1966.
Ginott, H. *Group Psychotherapy with Children*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961.
Heathcote, D. *Drama in the Education of Teachers*. Newcastle upon Tyne: University Printing Service, 1971.
Kessler, J. *Psychopathology of Childhood*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966.
Lederman, J. *Anger and the Rocking Chair*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969.
Raths, L., et al. *Values and Teaching*. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1966.
Shaftel, F., and Shaftel, G. *Words and Action*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967.
Winnicott, D. W. *Playing and Reality*. New York: Basic Books, 1971.

READING COMPREHENSION

Phonic analysis involves the ability to identify the sounds of the English language, the symbols devised to represent them, and the ability to associate sound with symbol. But to equip a child with a knowledge of phonics and to ignore other skills will limit his fluency and efficiency in reading. Reading is more than translating symbols into speech: surely, the ability to read means that one is able to get ideas and information from the printed word. The development of independence in reading depends on acquiring methods of unlocking the pronunciation of words, but it must be remembered that reading is a process of getting meaning from printed word symbols and is more than just a mechanical process and the making of noises associated with symbols.

John M. Hughes
Caerleen College of Education
Wales

Ideas about facilitating early writing are provided by E. Muriel Martin, assistant superintendent, St. Albert Protestant Separate School District No. 6, Alberta.

E. M. Martin

WRITING EARLY

Studies in the field of reading which have attempted to define approaches or programs best suited to student needs have invariably found that, in the final analysis, the teacher is the single most influential variable. It is my firm belief that a parallel situation exists in teaching writing. The key to success is a perceptive and empathetic teacher who provides the means for students to learn through opportunities to discover, to experiment, and to write. In essence, this individual is a facilitator and one who understands the principles of child development and language growth.

First attempts at writing by first graders who enjoy conversation are very much like their speech. Ideas flow and trip over each other. Rarely do these youngsters have to be coaxed to write. A pencil is to write with and writing is fun. The following was borrowed from a little girl whose wise mother cherishes her daughter's efforts and keeps them in a favorite scrapbook:

IF I WERE A POLICEMAN

IF I WERE A POLICEMAN A WLOUD TRAIY TO FIND YOUR WAY HOME. I LIKE PEOPLE. MAYBE SOME DAY I WILL BE A POLICEMAN JUST MAYBE. BUT DID YOU EVER HERE OF A GIRL POLICEMAN. BUT I JUST LIKE BEING A GIRL.

Raymond is typical of an average grade two student and offers his ideas about policemen for others to consider.

Becoming an R.C.M.P.*

Becoming an R.C.M.P. you have to know all the policeman and all the R.C.M.P.es. You need lots of traneing and xsircise. They have to

*Royal Canadian Mounted Police

know what to do when there is a rodry or a murder. You have to know what to do in a park like when they poissin the animals.

Enthusiasm for writing and an interest in experimenting with newly acquired skills spills over into the second grade classroom. Writing is for sharing, and young students blossom under the direction of a teacher who selects the positive attributes of their efforts and shares their ideas with others. Grade two is also the grade where formal spelling may be introduced, though caution needs to be exercised that concern for correctness in spelling does not inhibit the flow of ideas.

In grades one to three many skill learnings can be acquired through the study of literature being read to or by the students. Peer corrections, too, are less damaging to pupil self-concept. At every grade level there are differences among children in both achievement and interest level, and the further up the grade ladder, the greater the differences are. The greatest challenge for the teacher is to break down the inhibiting factors that prevent student involvement. Acceptance seems to be the magic formula in so many instances. Acceptance does not imply accepting anything or everything; it means getting to know students as people and expecting work in terms of readiness and ability and moving onward from where they are.

Here are some thoughts of hockey-enthusiast Stephen:

Comontating

Comontating is not a party.
You have to know which
hockey player is which. And
their names. But you don't
have to know their phone
number and address. You ha
ve to have a clear voice.
And you can't stop in the
midle of the game to take
a rest. The only time you can
stop is in comerchils
and intermissions. You have
got to know all the
penltey signs. You have
to know their hockey numb
ers on the back of their shirt.
So that is what comontating is
all about. THE END

Early in November the following was selected from a grade three scribbler. It shows the growth in language development of a youngster who has spent slightly over two years in school. This youngster has ac-

quired learnings that many older students have not yet achieved. Her language program will differ in scope from those provided for some of her classmates.

Mean Mr. Peabody

> Inside the house, Mr. P said gruffly "You boys ought to be ashamed of your selves! Picking on an old man like me!" "We're sorry sir" said Beany in a small voice. "You bet you're going to be sorry. Because I'm going to tell your folks, and when they hear about it they'll tan you pink!" "Look at the trouble you got us into!" said Ted, looking at Beany. "Well, I was going to. . . ." "Stop this chit-chat!" ordered Mr. Peabody. "Yes, sir" said Ted. "Now, you just wait while I get on the phone, and phone your folks." said Mr. Peabody gruffly. Then he snickered and asked Ted "What's your phone number?" Ted told him. Then he asked Beany and Danny their phone number. Boy, when Beany got home his parents were as mad as wet hens! And he got it, boy!

Exchanging student writings from class to class or between grade levels has a special effect on all children. Often one student's writing is an incentive to another youngster. Writing for others indicates a useful purpose to an activity that is far more worthwhile in the student's view than writing for a mark from the teacher. The practice of sharing ideas in written form is a useful one at all educational levels.